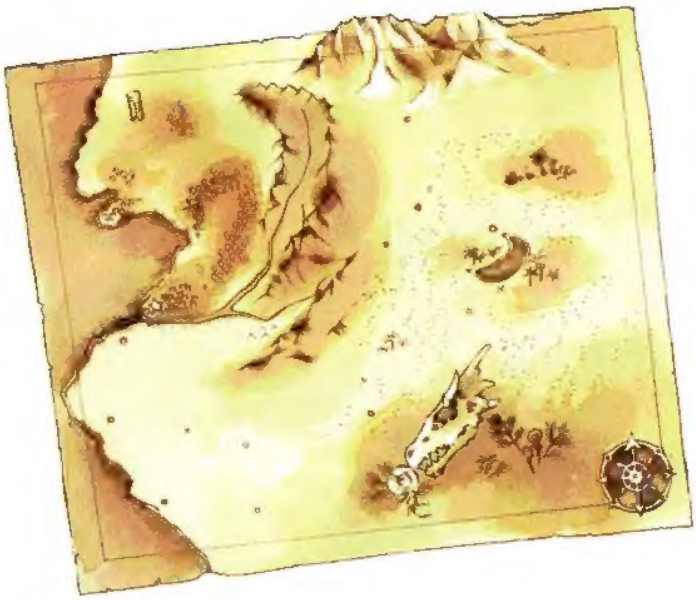
西の善き魔女

The Good Witch of the West

7

The Good Witch of the West and the Brave King of the East,
calling up a wise man and a poet, and then visiting an icy city.
It is over when the midday star falls.
Who is standing behind you ? ...that

原作○荻原規子
漫画○桃川春日子



Contents

Chapter 32: Battlefield 3

Chapter 33: My Lord 25

Chapter 34: The Goddess of Rage 57

Chapter 35: The Tower in the Snowy Field 83

Chapter 36: What the Queen Has to Say 107

Chapter 37: You're What I Want to Protect 127

Chapter 38: Symphony of the Stars 145

IT'S TIME.

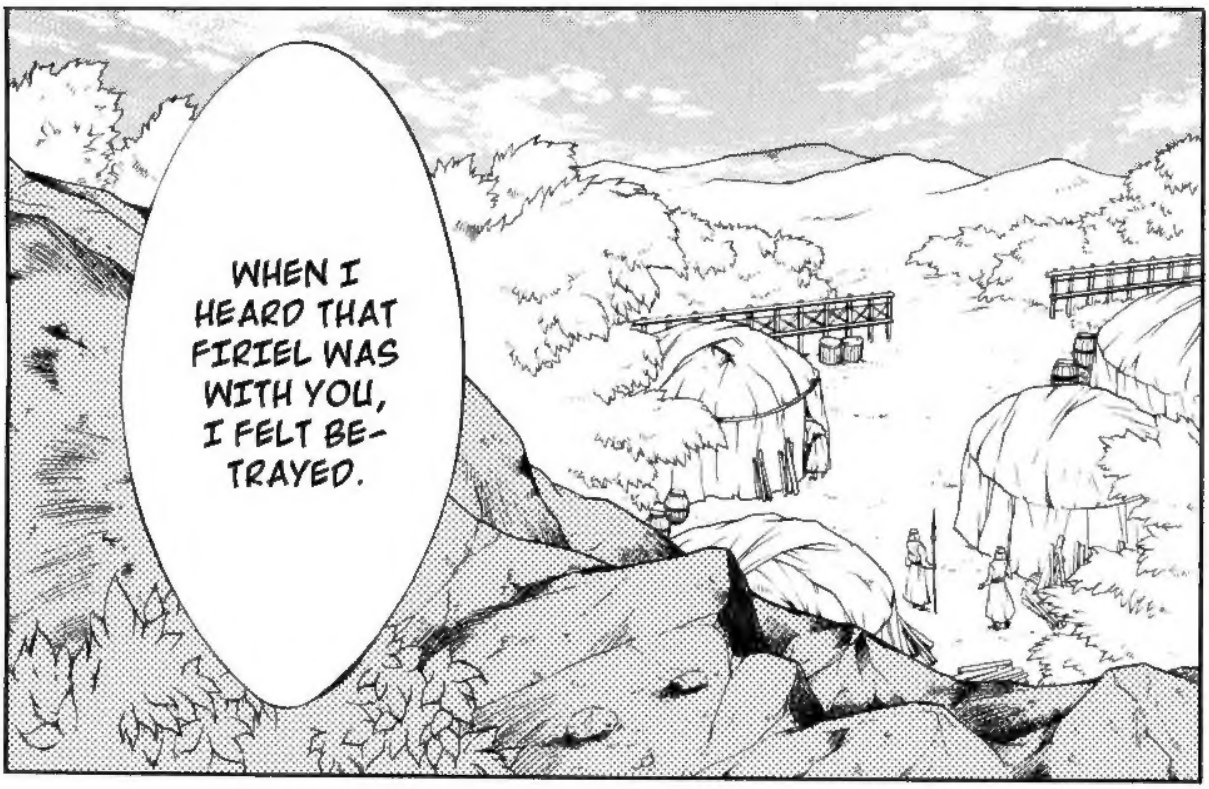
Chapter 32: Battlefield

HERE'S THE PLAN.
THE BRIGION BASE IS THERE.
AND THIS IS THE DRAGON FOREST.
OUR JOB IS TO GET THE PLANT-EATER DRAGONS TO THE BASE WITHOUT THE BRIGION ARMY NOTICING.
コト!

WE'LL USE THE EXPLOSIVES AND THE UNICORNS TO CONTROL THE DRAGONS' DIRECTION AND SLAM THEM INTO THE ENEMY ARMY.
ONLY THE DRAGON KNIGHT AND THE UNICORNS ...
...CAN HANDLE THAT TASK.
WE NEED A DECOY TO MAKE THIS WORK.
THE DECOY WILL HAVE TO BUY TIME UNTIL THE PLANT-EATER DRAGONS ARRIVE.

I WILL GO.
CAP-TAIN BAUD-WIN ?!
THE ENEMY BADLY OUTNUM-BERS US.
BUT WE CAN STILL WIN--
AS LONG AS WE HAVE THE UNI-CORNS!

THE SUN HAS ALMOST REACHED ITS ZENITH.
I...
...WILL NOT APOLO-GIZE FOR HITTING YOU.
I'VE THOUGHT LONG AND HARD ABOUT THIS.
YOU AND I...
...THE REASON WE ARE HERE NOW IS BECAUSE OF FIRIEL.


WHEN I HEARD THAT FIRIEL WAS WITH YOU, I FELT BE-TRAYED.

SHE HAD SPOKEN SO MUCH OF PROTECTING LORD EUSIS...

I'VE DECIDED THIS ARMY IS WHERE I BELONG.
BUT AFTER ALL THAT HAS COME TO PASS, NOW *YOU* ARE HERE, HELP-ING LORD EUSIS...

IT FEELS TO ME AS IF ...
...FIRIEL'S INFLUENCE BROUGHT US ALL TOGETHER...
...THAT SHE'S GIVING US A PATH TO FOLLOW.

YEAH.

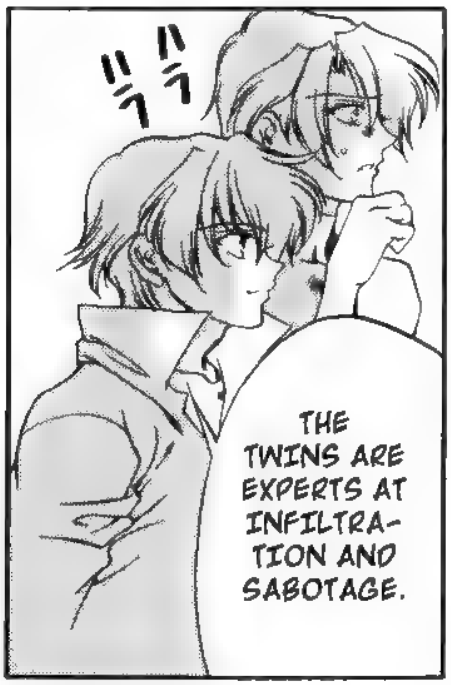
SHE'S A MYSTE-RIOUS GIRL.

FIRIEL HAS THAT AFFECT ON PEOPLE.

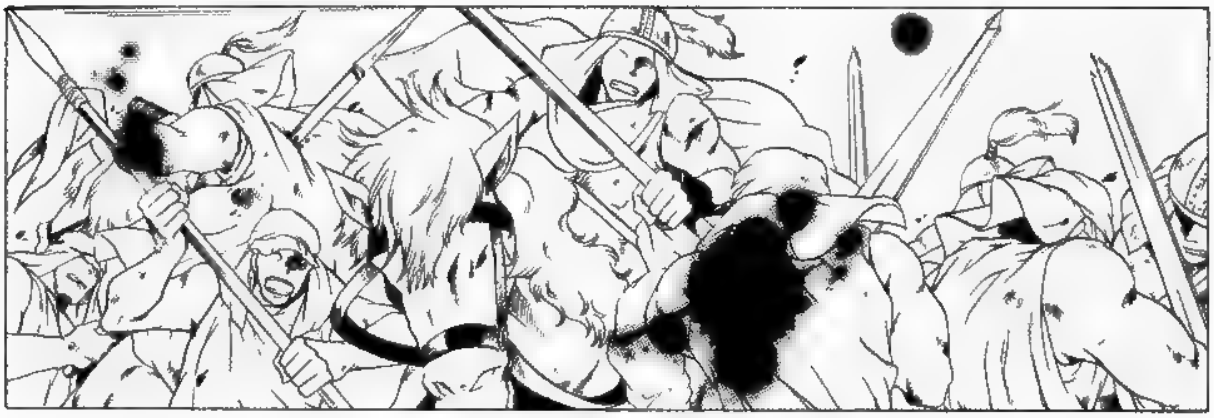
HERE THEY COME.
IT'S NOON.

IS IT KAGWELL ?!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
AN ATTACK ?!

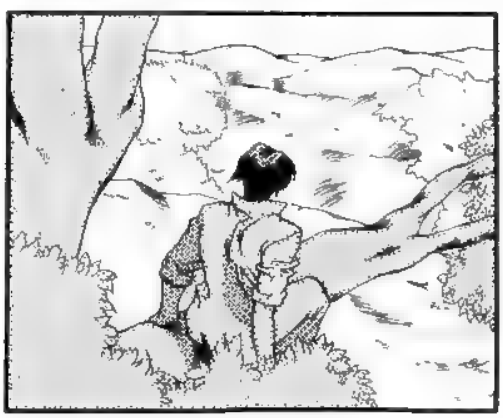
FIRE!
カキーン
カタッ
WHAT THE--?


THE TWINS ARE EXPERTS AT INFILTRATION AND SABOTAGE.

NONE OF THE GUNS WORK!
WHAT'S THIS?



ARE THE DRAGONS HERE YET?!
BALDWIN WON'T LAST OUT THERE!

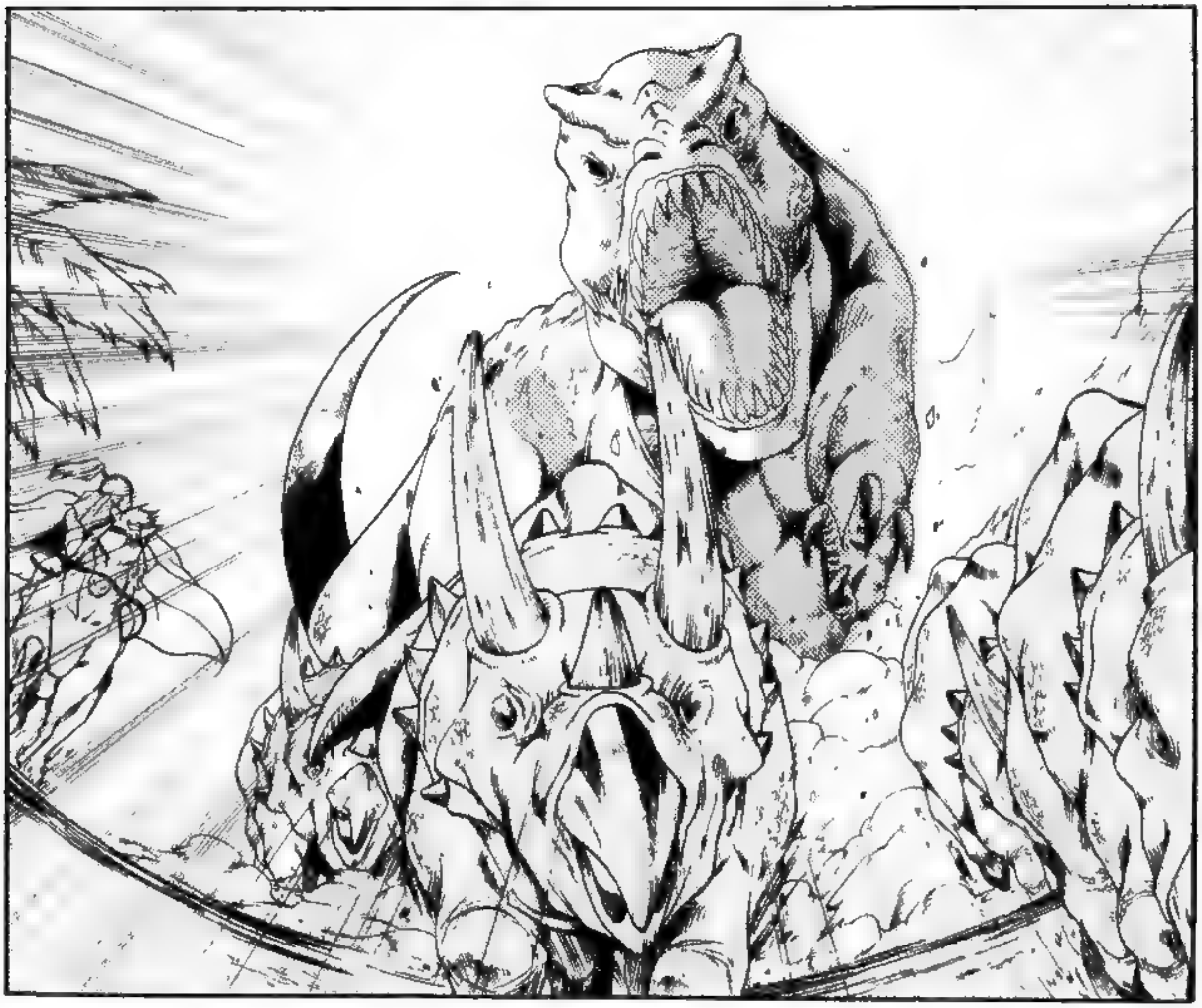


THEY'RE HERE!
ドドドドド

PUSH
AH--
NOW!
THE EXPLOSIVE POWDER!
GOT IT!

DRAG-
ONS!
UWAAAH!
A HERD OF
PLANT-EATER
DRAGONS!

THIS IS BAD, EUSIS!
LOOK BEHIND US!
A MEAT-EATER!
IT WORK-ED!
IT'S FOLLOWING ITS PREY!



WHAT AWFUL LUCK--HE'LL DRIVE THEM IN THE WRONG DIRECTION!

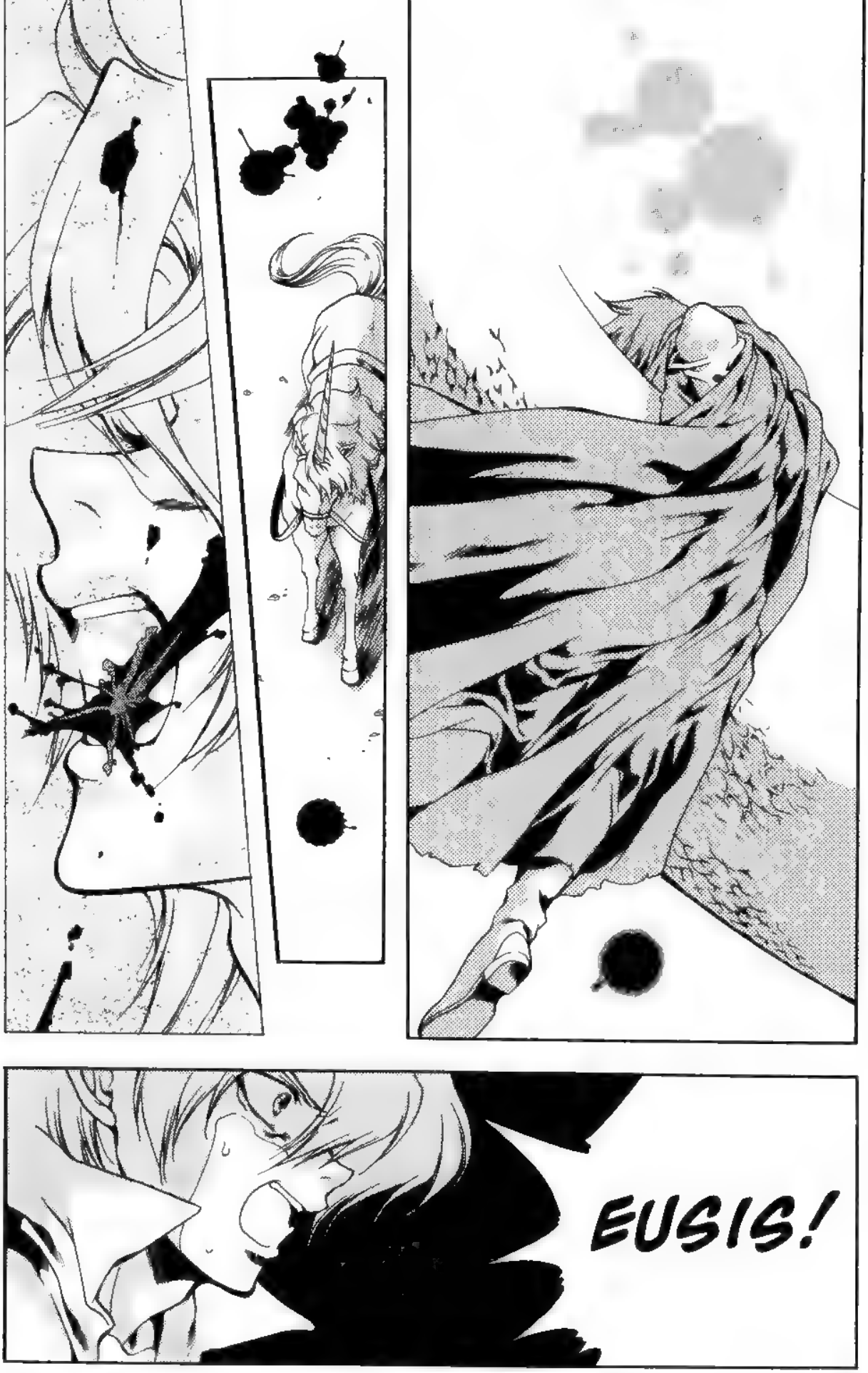
I'LL DEFEAT HIM!

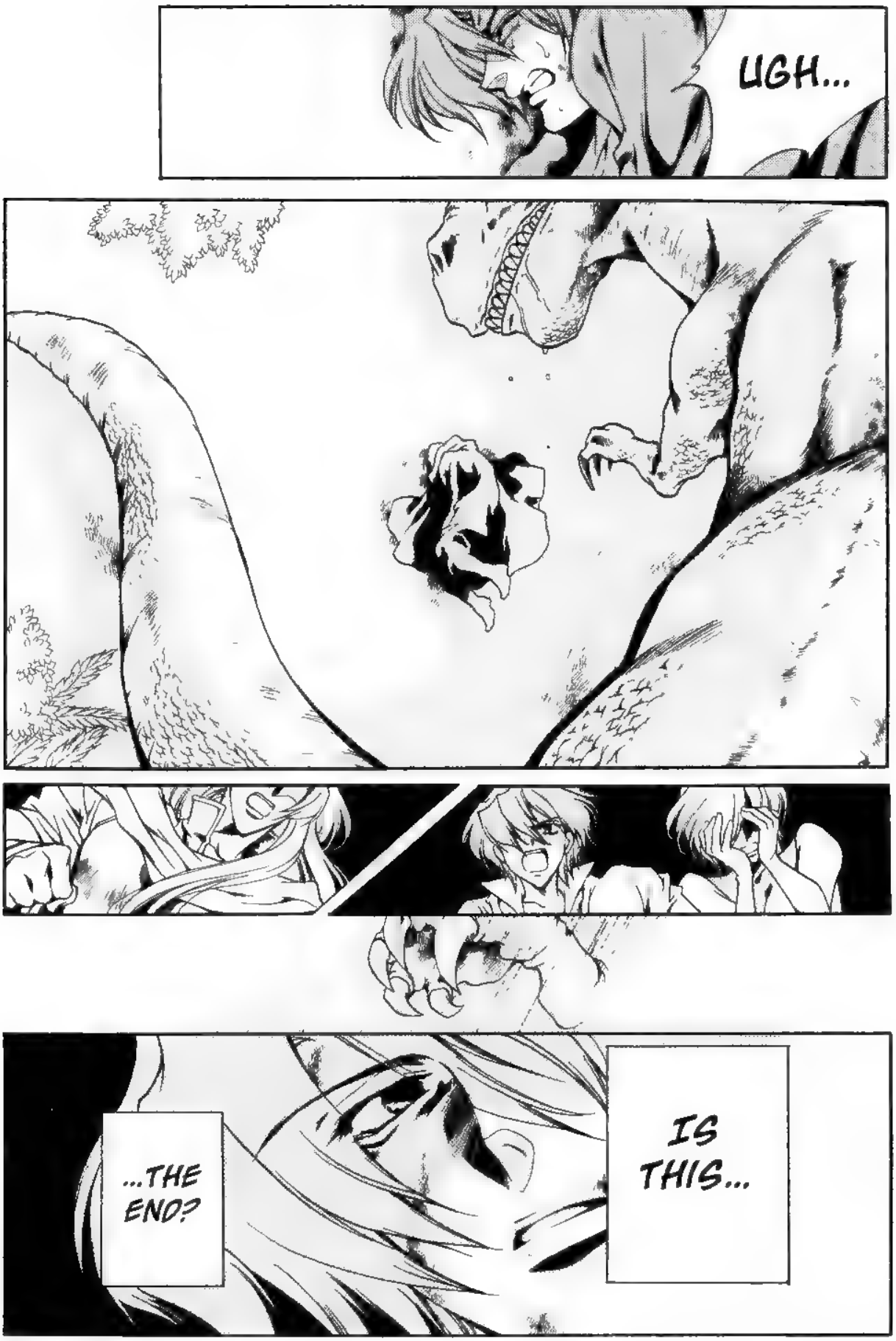
LET'S GO, ARTHUR!

BEHIND YOU!

EUSIS!

Chapter 33: My Lord


EUSIS!


UGH...
...THE END?
IS THIS...

MY LORD BROTH-ER!

110
ARTHUR!

ARTHUR...

EUSIS!
EUSIS
...

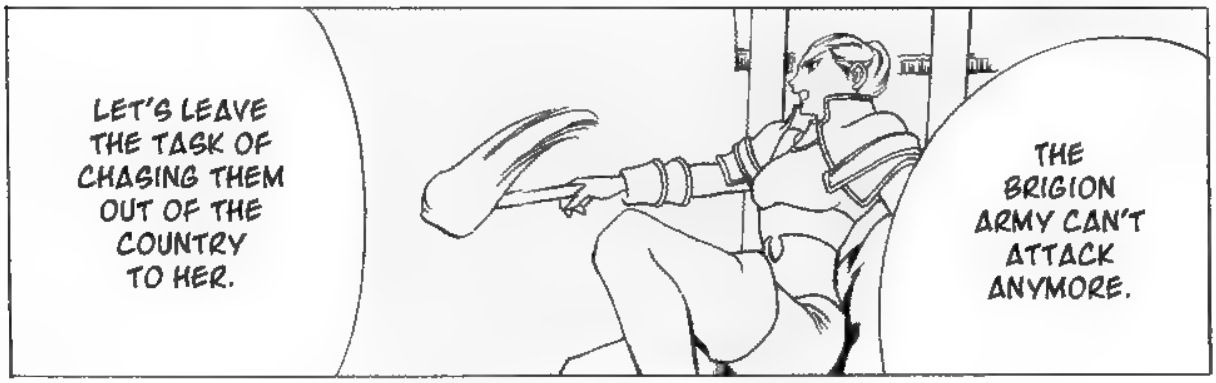
SUCH NOBLE EFFORT.
NOT JUST YOU...
...BUT ALSO THE UNICORN.
THIS MUST HURT...
...BUT WE STILL NEED TO DEFEAT THE REST OF THE BRIGION FORCES.

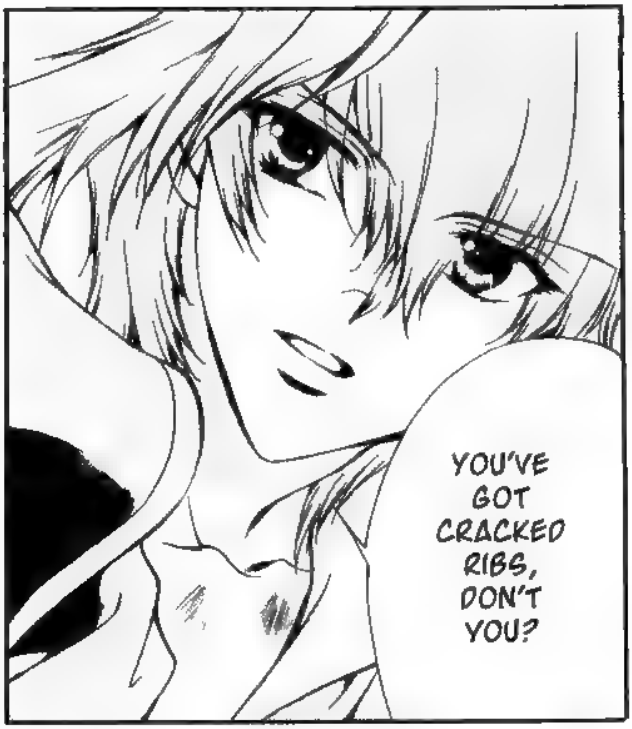
?!
WHAT'S THAT?
LOOK-- A HUGE FORCE BEHIND BAUDWIN'S DIVISION!
IT CAN'T BE...
WHAT?
IT'S THE GRAAL ARMY!
THAT'S THE AS-TRAEA GRAIL!

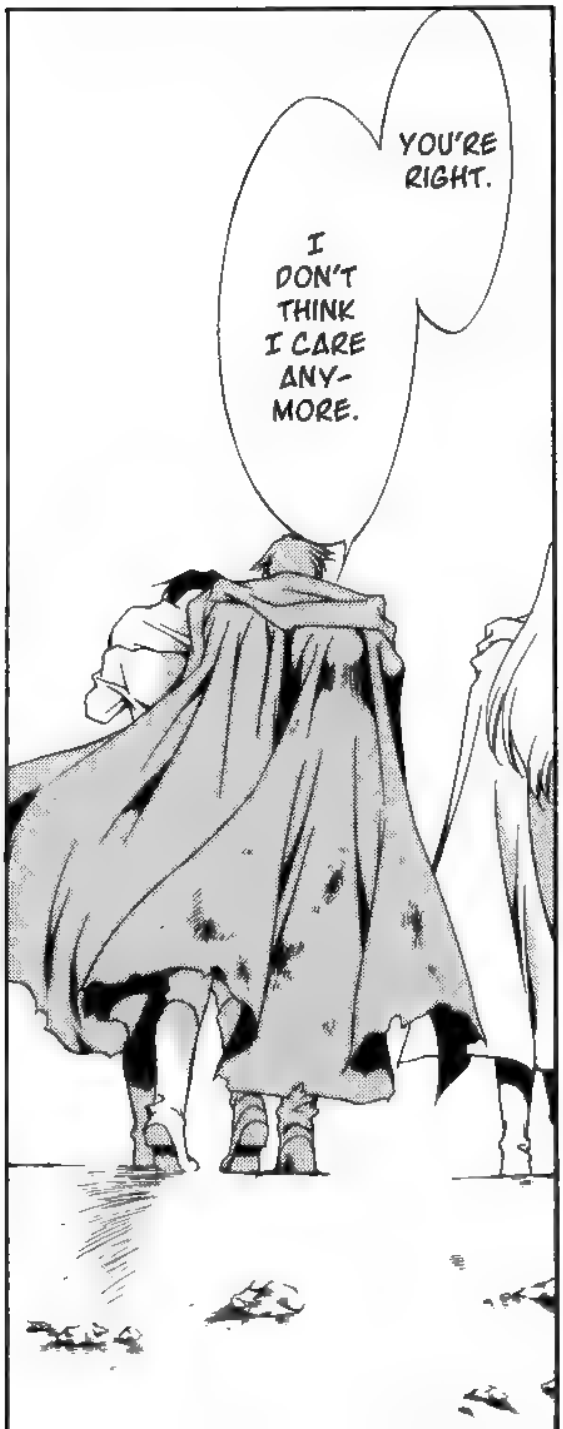
IN A WAY ...
...YOU COULD ALMOST CALL IT SPLENDID. HERE SHE COMES, AFTER THE HARD WORK IS DONE, TO TAKE ALL THE GLORY FOR HERSELF.

LEAN-DRA...!

LET'S GET OFF TO THE SIDE.
Hup!
FINE BY ME.


LET'S LEAVE THE TASK OF CHASING THEM OUT OF THE COUNTRY TO HER.
THE BRIGION ARMY CAN'T ATTACK ANYMORE.


YOU'VE GOT CRACKED RIBS, DON'T YOU?


YOU'RE RIGHT.
I DON'T THINK I CARE ANY-MORE.

OUR JOB HERE IS DONE.

YOU SURE YOU SHOULD BE OUT OF BED?
I'M FINE.
LEANDRA INVITED ME TO A VICTORY PARTY NEXT WEEK.
ALL THE DRAGON KNIGHTS WILL BE THERE.
I'D LIKE TO TAKE YOU TOO.

I'M A HERETIC AND A FUGITIVE.

ALL RIGHT.

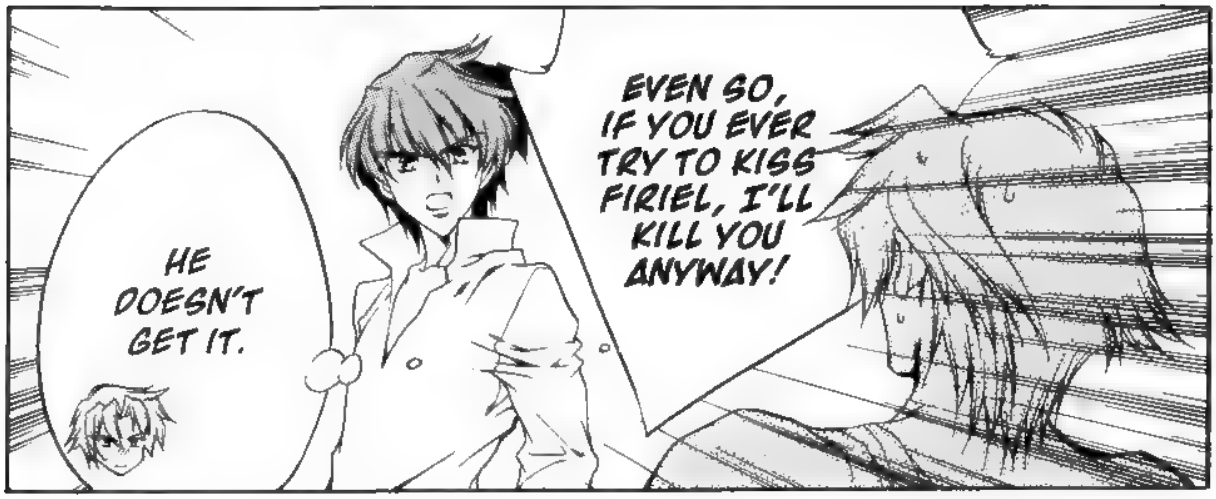
IF SHE GIVES UP ON YOU, ROLAND WILL "FORGET" ABOUT THE ASSASSINATION SHE PLANNED.

YOU MADE THIS VICTORY POSSIBLE.

AND YOU DON'T WANT LEANDRA HUNTING YOU FOREVER BECAUSE OF THE ASSASSINATION, DO YOU?
I'M GOING TO MAKE HER A LITTLE DEAL AT THE BANQUET.

I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU TO PATCH UP MY WOUNDS.
YOU FIGURE OUT ALL KINDS OF THINGS WHEN YOU CONFRONT DEATH...
...YOU WANTED TO ABANDON THE HOUSE OF ROLAND?
I'D CONSIDERED STAYING OUT HERE IN THE FOREST WITH MY COMPANIONS BECAUSE I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE THE BETTER CHOICE.
THE TRUTH IS, I HAVEN'T BEEN SURE WHAT TO DO.

...AND WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TO PRO-TECT.
I UNDER-STAND. I'VE BEEN THERE.
I'M SURE, WHEN IT HAPPENED TO HIM, HE THOUGHT OF FIRIEL.
YOU AND I...
...WE'RE THE SAME.
BUT...
...THE ONE WHOSE FACE YOU SEE WHEN YOU'RE ABOUT TO DIE...
THAT TELLS YOU WHERE YOU TRULY BELONG...

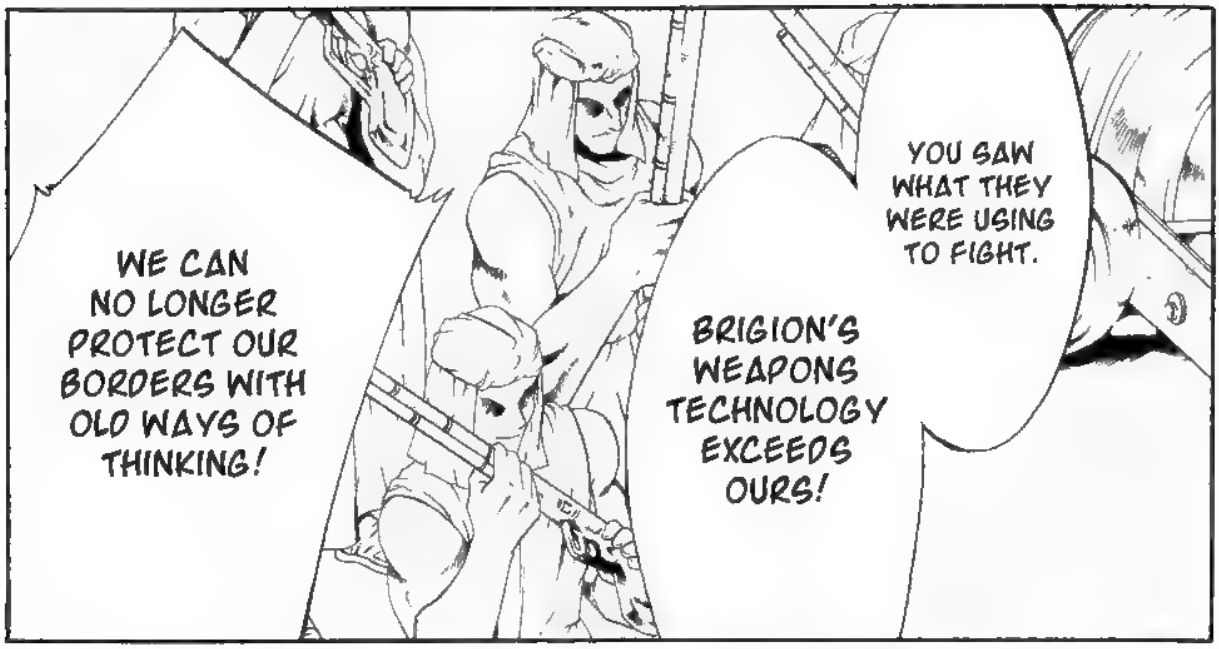

HE DOESN'T GET IT.
EVEN SO, IF YOU EVER TRY TO KISS FIRIEL, I'LL KILL YOU ANYWAY!

What a lovely aroma..
PLEASE, ENJOY YOUR-SELVES.
HAVE A SEAT.
WEL-COME TO MY TENT...
...BRAVE DRAGON SLAYERS!

EUSIS, I WAS IMPRESSED BY YOUR SUPERB LEADERSHIP.
THAT INITIATIVE IS WHAT GRAAL NEEDS.
I HOPE YOU'LL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH US...
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. I AM FIGHTING FOR ADALE AS A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF ROLAND.
I CANNOT FIGHT UNDER YOUR BANNER.
I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT WAS ODD.
THE STRUGGLES FOR SUCCESSION HAVE KEPT GRAAL DIVIDED FOR AGES...
...SO THAT NO ONE GREAT POWER EVER EMERGES.
I THINK IT'S DELIBERATE.

WHO DO YOU BELIEVE IS BEHIND IT?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT...
IT'S KEPT GRAAL FROM LOOKING OUTSIDE ITS BORDERS FOR 900 YEARS...

ISN'T IT STRANGE?
THESE STUPID DOMESTIC QUARRELS KEEP GOING...
...AND THEY HAVE KEPT OUR TERRITORY THE SAME SIZE FOR 900 YEARS!
BUT ISN'T THAT ALSO THE PRIDE OF GRAAL?
WE MAINTAIN PEACE IN OUR BORDERS WITHOUT INVADING OR OPPRESSING OTHER COUNTRIES.
DON'T BE ABSURD!
YOU ONLY SAY THAT BECAUSE YOU'RE THE QUEEN'S DOG!
LOOK TO THE EAST! TO BRIGION!
DESPITE THEIR VASTLY INFERIOR CULTURE, THEY'RE EXPANDING THEIR BORDERS AT AN ALARMING RATE!


WE CAN NO LONGER PROTECT OUR BORDERS WITH OLD WAYS OF THINKING!
BRIGION'S WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY EXCEEDS OURS!
YOU SAW WHAT THEY WERE USING TO FIGHT.

WANT TO BRING HERETICS LIKE THAT YOUNG MAN INTO THE LIGHT OF THE GODDESS!
I--

THE KNOWLEDGE THAT WAS BRANDED AS HERESY IS EXACTLY WHAT GRAAL NEEDS NOW!

THE SUN'S ALREADY UP...
ABOUT WHAT SHE SAID...
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
BUT I'M ADALE'S KNIGHT.
THAT WILL NEVER CHANGE.
I WAS ALWAYS DOUBTFUL OF LETTING SOMEONE LIKE YOU GO TO WASTE.
SHE'S SMART.
I THINK SHE HAS A POINT.

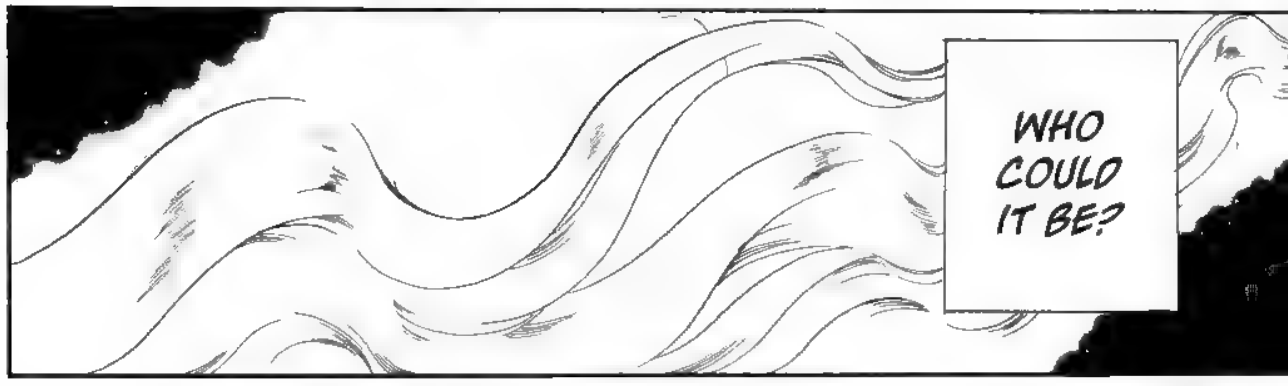
"...NOT HER REAL CHILD."
"WHY DOES MOTHER NEVER SCOLD ME?"
"SHE SCOLDS YOU, MY LORD BROTHER ..."
"IT'S BECAUSE I'M..."
"DON'T CRY."
"I'M HERE FOR YOU."
I CHOSE THIS WAY OF LIFE TO PROTECT HER.
THAT'S WHY I BECAME A DRAGON KNIGHT.
MY ONE AND ONLY MASTER IS ADALE.

SO...
...I'M GOING BACK TO GRAAL.
THERE'S SOMETHING I FORGOT TO TELL YOU, I FEEL LIKE...
IT'S SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT.
WHAT'S SHE DOING NOW, I WONDER?
"MY LORD BROTHER..."

...YEAH.
I'M GOING BACK TO FIRIEL TOO.
YES...
UWAAAAH!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
LORD EUSIS!
A UNI-CORN!
THERE'S A HUGE UNICORN INSIDE THE CAMP!

A MALE UNI-CORN ?!

WHO COULD CONTROL SUCH A HUGE AND VICIOUS BEAST?


WHO COULD IT BE?

MY LORD BROTHER!
A...
ADALE ?!

ADALE COULD BARELY RIDE A HORSE!
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?
WELL, I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN RIDE LANCELOT.

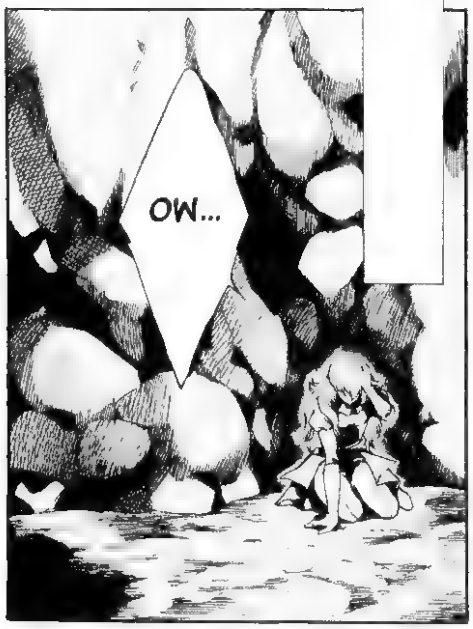
THAT'S --
THE QUEEN'S TOUCH-STONE, WHICH LETS YOU CON-TROL UNI-CORNS!
PRINCESS AUGUSTA GAVE ME THIS.
ADALE... YOU MET YOUR BIRTH MOTHER?
SUCH A LOSS AFFECTS YOU MORE THAN IT DOES TO OTHER PEOPLE, SO...
THE STORY OF YOU LOSING YOUR UNICORN REACHED ALL THE WAY TO THE CASTLE.
PLEASE RIDE LANCE-LOT, MY LORD!

I WENT TO TOLBAT IN THE DESERT...
...AND LEARNED AN AWFUL TRUTH THERE.
MY...
...MY LORD BROTHER, SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS HAPPENING IN GRAAL!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
IT'S TOO LATE FOR YOU.
THE FIRE-BIRD'S FEATHER IS NOW MINE.
I'M GUESSING THE TRIAL TO DETERMINE THE NEXT QUEEN IS NOW INVALID.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
HIGH PRIESTESS MANIEL, THE REPRE-SENTATIVE OF THE GODDESS WHO LIVES IN ASTRAEA TEMPLE...
SHE WAS THE ONE WHO CAME UP WITH THIS TRIAL AND USED BRIGION'S ATTACK TO LURE US TO THE SOUTH.
WHILE WE WERE BUSY HERE, SHE PUT MOST OF GRAAL'S FORCES UNDER HER OWN COMMAND.
THE TEMPLE ...
AS YOU WERE CHAS-ING BRIGION FROM THE SOUTH, THE KAGWELL ROYAL FAMILY FLED IN THE NIGHT.
SHE'S TOLD EVERYONE THAT IT WAS YOUR DOING.
IT'S TRUE THAT MANIEL HAS BEEN THE QUEEN'S AGENT FOR YEARS ...
...BUT WHY WOULD THE QUEEN ALLOW SUCH A PLOT TO OCCUR?
IN THE WORST CASE...

...THE QUEEN MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN SLAIN, AND BOTH THE TEMPLE AND PALACE...
...COULD WELL HAVE FALLEN TO MANIEL'S HANDS.
FIRI-EL!
ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO THE PALACE?
OF COURSE I AM!
I'M GONNA GIVE THE QUEEN, HERSELF, A PIECE OF MY MIND!
I WON'T FEEL SATISFIED UNTIL I DO!

HIGH PRIEST-ESS...
...A RAT HAS SNUCK INTO THE TEMPLE.
OH?



Chapter 34: The Goddess of Rage

THREE HOURS EARLIER...
KAIN...
...THE CAPITOL FEELS DIFFERENT.
THERE'RE STATUES OF THE GODDESS AND RELIGIOUS ICONOGRAPHY IN ALL THE SHOPS...
ISN'T THAT A LITTLE WEIRD FOR A LAISSEZ-FAIRE PLACE LIKE THE CAPITOL?
I MUST FIND OUT--
WHAT HIGH PRIEST-ESS MANIEL IS PLAN-NING!

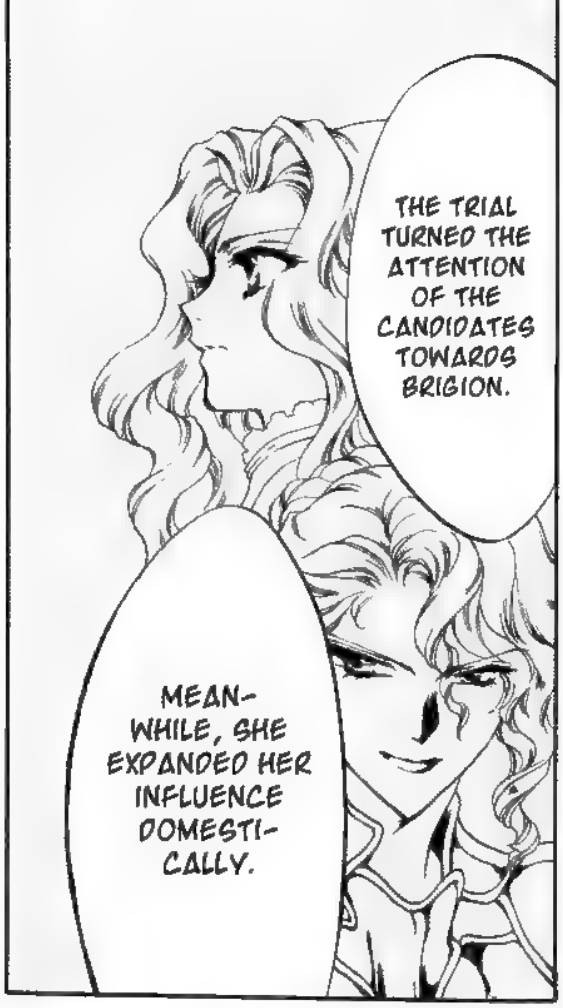
IT'S POSSIBLE WE MAY HAVE...
WELL, FIRIEL...
THERE IS A RUMOR GOING AROUND...

...FOREVER LOST THE CHANCE TO SPEAK TO THE QUEEN.

THE QUEEN IS DEAD?!

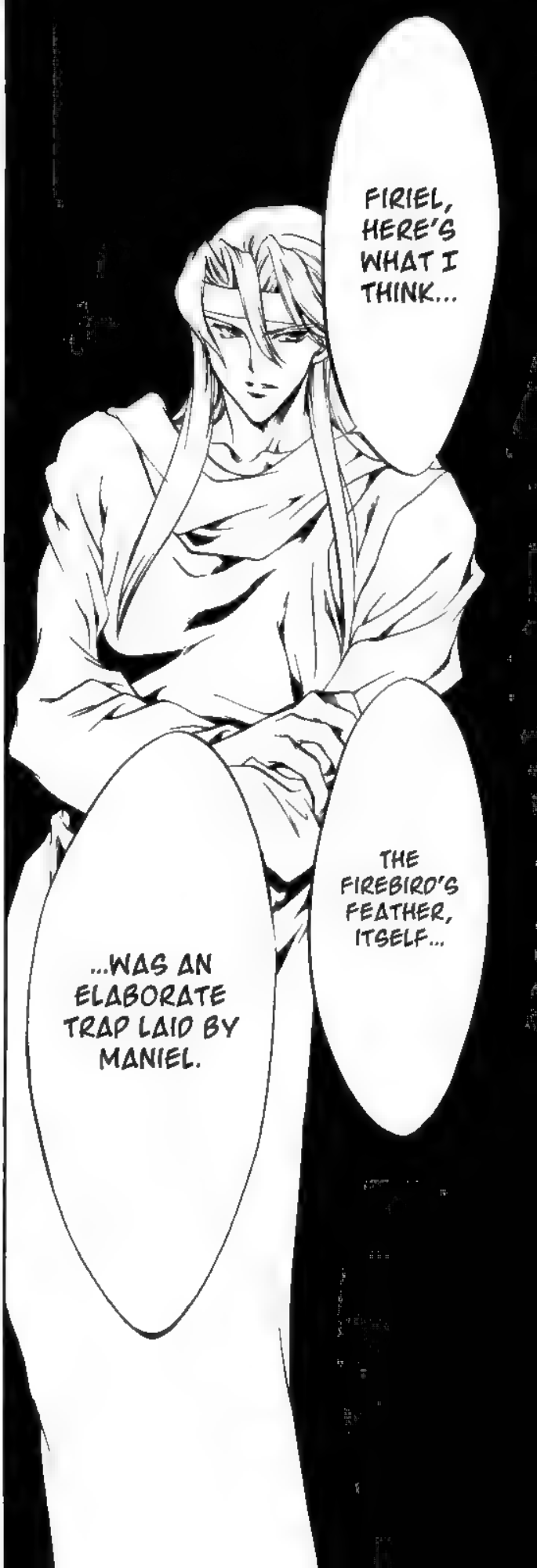
AND SO THAT MEANS...
...IF THE QUEEN DID DIE, BARELY ANYONE WOULD KNOW IT...
...EVEN IF THE QUEENDOM IS BEING RULED IN HER NAME.
AND SHE MUST BE GETTING RATHER OLD...
IT'S BEEN THE TEMPLE, NOT THE PALACE, THAT HAS BEEN RULING THINGS FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS.
IN TRUTH, IT WOULD SEEM...
...THE RUMOR'S BEEN AROUND FOR A WHILE.
IT WAS YEARS AGO THAT SHE LAST SHOWED HERSELF.
THE HOLY GROUNDS OF ASTRAEA'S FOREST ARE OFF LIMITS TO EVERYONE.
THE ONLY ONE WHO MAY ENTER ...
...IS THE QUEEN'S AGENT, HIGH PRIESTESS MANIEL.

FOR YEARS SHE'S BEEN MAKING A NAME FOR HERSELF AS A CAPABLE ELDER STATES-WOMAN.
HER POWER HAS BEEN GROWING RAPIDLY.
SHE HAS GATHERED SUPPORT FROM NOBLES AND COMMONERS WHO FEAR RULE BY THE YOUNG, INEXPERIENCED QUEENS-IN-WAITING.
HIGH PRIEST MANIEL--
SHE'S THE ONE WHO KNOWS THE TRUTH!


THE TRIAL TURNED THE ATTENTION OF THE CANDIDATES TOWARDS BRIGION.
MEAN-WHILE, SHE EXPANDED HER INFLUENCE DOMESTI-CALLY.

...WAS TO CONCEN-TRATE LEANDRA'S ARMIES THERE...
...ALL WHILE TRIPPING UP ADALE AND HER FACTION AT THE SAME TIME!

THE REASON SHE IGNORED BRIGION'S ADVANCE TO THE SOUTH...


FIRIEL, HERE'S WHAT I THINK...
THE FIREBIRD'S FEATHER, ITSELF...
...WAS AN ELABORATE TRAP LAID BY MANIEL.

DOING SUCH THINGS IN THE NAME OF THE QUEEN ...
IT'S UNFOR-GIVABLE!

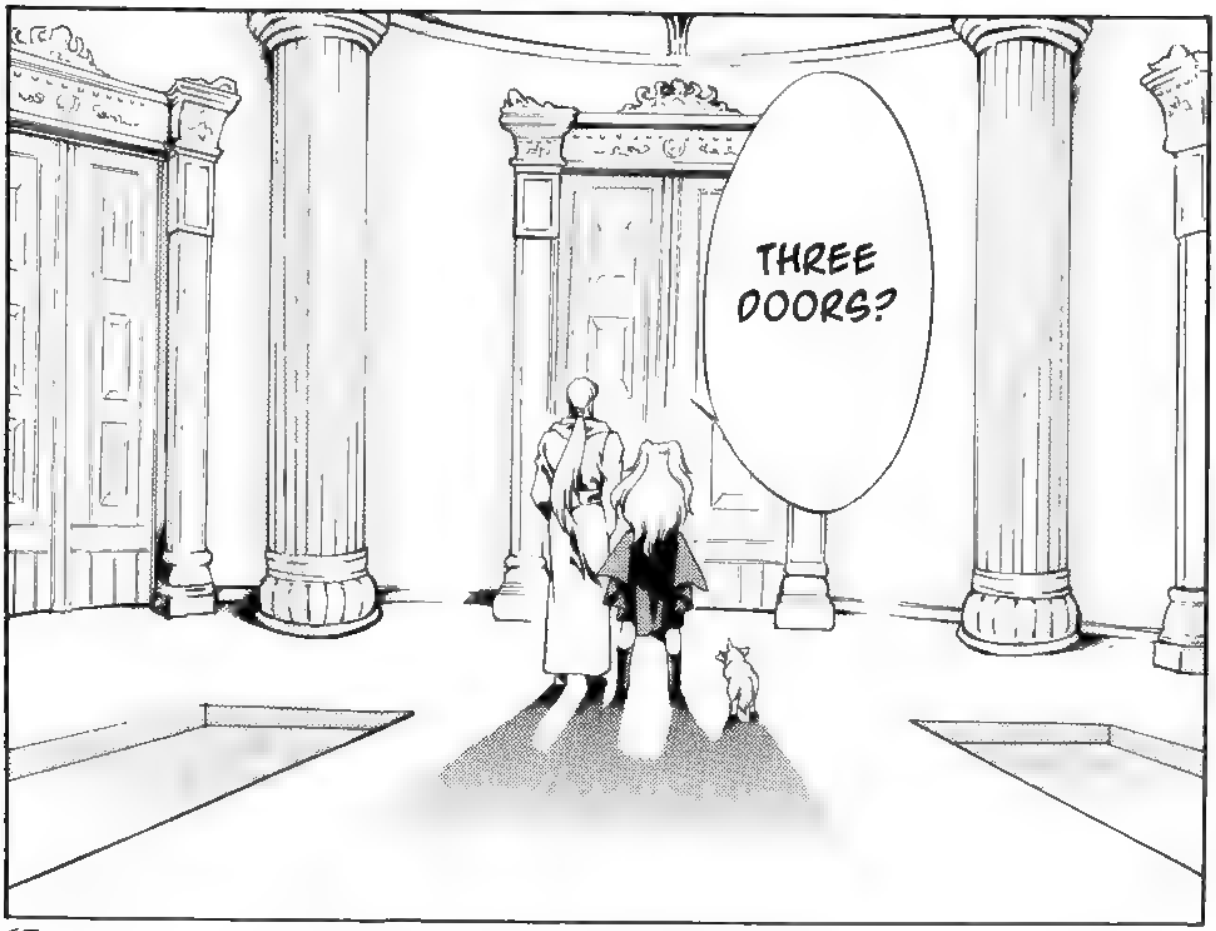
IF THAT'S THE CASE--
LET'S GO TO THE TEMPLE IN THE FOREST!

THAT'S THE TEMPLE.
YOUR FRIENDS IN THE CIRCLE OF HERMES TOLD ME TO GIVE THIS TO YOU.
WHAT IS IT?
I WAS TOLD IT CONTAINS VARIOUS INVENTIONS AND SUCH.

Dear Lady Firiel,
Throw the pill in water. It will produce a lot of smoke.

You can use it as a distraction.

EVERYONE IN THE CIRCLE LOVES YOU SO MUCH.
THEY TOLD ME TO GIVE IT TO YOU IF I THOUGHT YOU WOULD NEED IT.
ALL OF THEM...


THREE DOORS?

HMM...
WHICH DOOR DO YOU THINK IT IS, KAIN?
MOST OF THE TIME IN THESE CASES ...
...NO MATTER WHAT DOOR YOU PICK, NOTHING GOOD HAPPENS.

SEE?

THIS WAY!

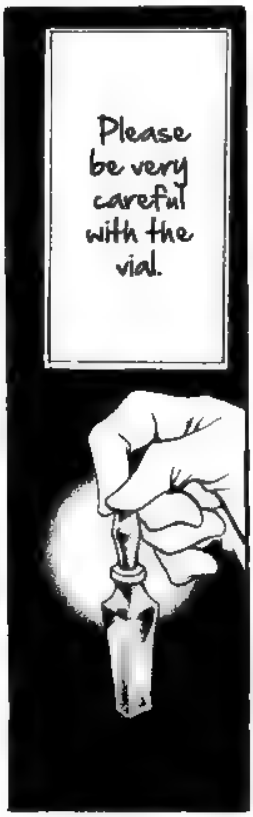
WHAT IS THIS?
...A STATUE OF THE GOD-DESS?

BUT NEXT TO THE USUAL STATUE OF THE STAR GODDESS...
IS THAT A... UNI-CORN?
...IS A GODDESS WITH A TERRIBLE LOOK OF RAGE.
AND THE ONE ON THE OTHER SIDE ISN'T EVEN HUMAN...

FIRI-
EL!!
KYAAAH!
OOF...
OW...
I HAD NO IDEA THERE WAS A CAVE LIKE THIS UNDER THE HOLY TEMPLE...

WELL, THE FIRST THING I NEED TO DO IS GET OUT OF HERE.

It's an antidote for the mind-control drug they use at the palace.


Please be very careful with the vial.

ええっ……

DID YOU FIND HER?
HIGH PRIESTESS MANIEL!

EDI-LENE'S DAUGH-TER?
I AM NO RAT!
MY NAME IS FIRIEL DEE!
I'M THE DAUGHTER OF EDI-LENE AND GIDEON DEE!
THIS JEWEL IS PROOF.
LET ME SEE THE QUEEN!

SIT.
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS!
I NEED TO TALK TO HER RIGHT AWAY!
I'VE HEARD THE QUEEN ISN'T DOING WELL.
THEN THERE'S NO NEED TO HURRY AT ALL.
SIT.
WHAT ...
...DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

FIRIEL...
...WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THAT GODDESS STATUE?
HEH.
IT WAS A STUPID TRICK!
THOSE GLOWING EYES WOULDN'T FOOL A LITTLE KID!
BUT THAT TERRIFYING FORM DEPICTS THE TRUTH.
IT REVEALS TO US...
...THE PRIMITIVE AND TRUE NATURE OF A WOMAN.

THE NATURE OF A WOMAN ...?
BUT ALL WOMEN SECRETLY CARRY A FACE TWISTED WITH VIOLENT RAGE AND JEALOUSY.
ON THE SURFACE, THEY LOOK KIND.
YOU ALWAYS SHINE SO BRIGHTLY WHEN YOU APPEAR BEFORE ME... A BRIGHTNESS THAT DRAWS OTHERS TO YOU.
ADALE AND LEANDRA.
PRINCESS EDILENE.
THE YOUNG QUEEN CONSTANCE.
ALL OF YOU--

AND YOU TOO DAUGHTER OF EDILENE...
...FLAUNTING YOUR LONG, SHINY HAIR...
YOU, IN THE LINE OF SUCCESSION, AND ME ON THE SIDELINES... WHAT SEPARATES US?!

THE QUEEN'S KINSHIP STONE?
THE BLOODLINE OF QUEEN ANNE? HAH!
I WILL BRING AN END TO THE ERA OF THE QUEENS!

Chapter 35: The Tower in the Snowy Field

CURSE YOU!
HOW CAN YOU MOVE? YOU DRANK THE DRUG!
タッ

I WON'T BE GOING TO SLEEP.
YOU WERE BEHIND IT ALL, WEREN'T YOU...
...HIGH PRIESTESS MANIEL!
WHERE IS THE QUEEN?!
IF SHE KNEW ABOUT THE FIREBIRD'S FEATHER AND BRIGION'S ADVANCE, WHY DIDN'T SHE DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT?
YOU CAN'T HAVE...
IS THE QUEEN ALREADY ...?
SEE FOR YOURSELF.

IN HELL!

GYAH!
UGAH!
GYAH!
AAH!
HIGH PRIEST-ESS...
...WHERE IS THE QUEEN'S ROOM?
THANK YOU, PROFES-SOR VAN JONES!
AAH!
AAHH!
AH!
AAAH!
Remember this, Firiel-- the High Priestess's greatest weakness is frogs.
IF YOU DON'T TELL ME, I'LL TOUCH YOU WITH ANOTHER FROG!

I NEVER GOT TO MEET YOU, QUEEN ASTRAEA...
...MY GRAND-MOTHER.
DON'T LET THERE JUST BE A COLD COFFIN IN HERE!
PLEASE...

WHAT?

A TOWER ?!

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR...
...IS A WHITE SNOWY FIELD...
IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE...?

YOU'RE AN IM-PRESSIVE LITTLE GIRL, FIRIEL.

...I SAW SOMETHING STANDING IN A SNOWY FIELD.
JUST NOW...
...

FILI?
SHE CAN'T MOVE FROM THAT SPOT.
SO SOME-TIMES I GO TO SEE HER.

THAT IS AN ILLU-SION OF FILI THE SAGE.

CAPTURE THE IN-TRUDER!!
GUARDS!

FIRIEL ...
...I HAVE COME TO FETCH YOU.
YOU'VE MADE IT THIS FAR YOURSELF...
...AND THE QUEEN WANTS TO MEET YOU PERSONALLY.
THE STAR QUEEN IS MY GRANDMOTHER!
WHAT'S WRONG WITH A GRANDDAUGHTER COMING TO SEE HER GRANDMOTHER?
SO ONCE AGAIN I SHALL OPEN A ROAD FOR YOU.

BARO... IS IT TRUE ?!
THAT MY GRANDMOTHER IS CALLING FOR ME...THAT SHE'S ALIVE?
OF COURSE SHE'S ALIVE.
GRAND-MOTHER!

WE'RE HERE, FIRIEL.
PALACE
CENTRAL TOWER

WOW!
THE NIGHT SKY?
NO.
THE WHOLE ROOF IS PAINTED LIKE A GIANT STAR MAP...

FIRIEL ?!
ADALE ?!
FIRIEL... OH, FIRIEL!
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE YOU AGAIN!
US?
THE BARD JUST SUMMONED US HERE.
LEANDRA!
BARD, EXPLAIN NOW!
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?

I WAS MEETING WITH THE ROYAL FAMILY OF TOLMARINE...
I WAS AT A STRATEGY CONFER-ENCE IN VARN TO THE SOUTH.
WE WERE DISCUSSING HOW TO RESTORE ORDER TO THE THREE SOUTHERN COUNTRIES THAT FELL TO THE BRIGION INVASION WHEN HE JUST SUDDENLY APPEARED!
WE WERE DISCUSSING HOW TOLMARINE, VARN, AND GRAAL COULD WORK TOGETHER TO REBUILD KAGWELL, NOW THAT ITS ROYAL FAMILY HAS FLED.

YOU'LL SEND US BACK WHEN WE'RE DONE HERE, RIGHT?!
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME!
AND NOW WE'RE AT THE PALACE IN MAY ANGELIE?
IT'S SILLY TO FIGHT WHILE MANIEL IS PLOTTING AGAINST US.
IT'S JUST FOR NOW!
WHEN DID YOU TWO START WORKING TOGETHER?
...YOU ALL DID COMPLETE IT.
EVEN IF THE TRIAL, ITSELF, WAS A FAKE...
OF COURSE, I'LL SEND YOU RIGHT BACK.
THE QUEEN RECOG-NIZES THAT.
SO I HAVE SUMMONED ALL OF THE QUEENS-IN-WAITING TO THE CHAMBER OF THE STARS.
I'M SORRY IF I STARTLED YOU.

YOU HAVE DONE WELL TO COM-PLETE SUCH A DIFFI-CULT TASK ...
...MY GRAND-DAUGH-TERS.

EACH ONE OF YOU...
...IS A WORTHY A DESCENDANT OF THE ROYAL FAMILY.
YOU ARE ALL INTELLIGENT, BEAUTIFUL, STRONG-WILLED, AND COURAGEOUS YOUNG GIRLS.
THIS IS ASTRAEA?
SHE'S SO MUCH SMALLER THAN I THOUGHT SHE WOULD BE...
THUS, I HAVE SUMMONED YOU HERE TO THE CHAMBER OF THE STARS, WHERE THE NEXT QUEEN IS ALWAYS DECIDED.
SHE...
...IS MY GRAND-MOTHER?
Y-
YOUR WORDS ARE FAR TOO KIND...
...MY QUEEN.

ESPE-
CIALLY
YOU,
FIRIEL
DEE.

...AND TIRELESS STRENGTH HAVE HAD A SURPRIS-ING INFLUENCE ON EVENTS.
BUT YOUR INITIA-TIVE...
YOU WERE NOT A QUEEN-IN-WAITING.

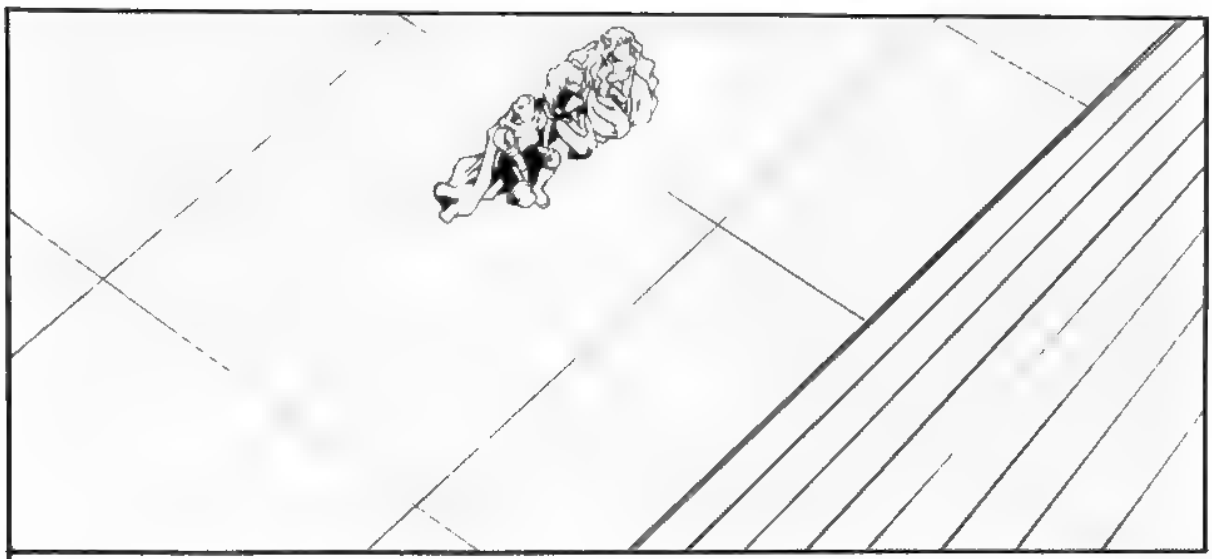
I HAVE A DUTY TO PROTECT THE PEACE AND ORDER OF THIS COUNTRY.
DO YOU THINK ME CRUEL?
...AT ONE POINT I HAD THOUGHT OF ELIMINATING YOU.
TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST...
YOU BRING THE DARKNESS OF HERESY INTO THE LIGHT OF THIS QUEEN-DOM.

BUT FIRIEL...
...YOU SURPASSED MY EXPECTATIONS IN EVERY WAY.
Hrm...
I'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD OF SUCH A THING, FIRIEL DEE.
SMACKING MANIEL WITH A FROG?
YOU DID WHAT?
OH, FIRIEL...
SO INSTEAD, I'D LIKE TO PUT YOU ON THE SAME LEVEL AS THE OTHER CANDIDATES, IN HOPES THAT I MIGHT MAINTAIN A BETTER HANDLE ON YOU.
YOU'RE FAR TOO DANGEROUS WHEN LEFT TO YOUR OWN DEVICES.

ADALE, YOU RECEIVED YOUR BRACELET FROM AUGUSTA, CORRECT...?
YES.
LEANDRA, COME HERE.
DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE MAKING FIRIEL A QUEEN-IN-WAITING?!
AH...
AT LAST I AM FREE!
THE KINSHIP STONE OF THIS RING IS NOW YOURS.

SUCH A HEAVY BURDEN...
SUCH A LONG TIME...
QUEENS-IN-WAITING...
I SHALL NOW TELL YOU...
...TO WHOM I HAVE DECIDED TO EN-TRUST THE FUTURE OF GRAAL.

Chapter 36: What the Queen has to Say



I AM TIRED.
WORK IT OUT FOR YOUR-SELVES.

YOUR HIGHNESS...
...ARE YOU TELLING US TO DECIDE FOR OURSELVES WHO IS TO BE QUEEN?
TO BE HONEST ...
...I WAS PREPARED TO MAKE MANIEL THE QUEEN.
?!
OF COURSE, I'M SURE THAT WOULD BE UPSETTING TO YOU.
BUT I AM NO LONGER CERTAIN HOW MUCH VALUE THERE IS IN MAINTAINING THE ROYAL BLOODLINE.
WHAT IS WRONG WITH HAVING SOMEONE OUTSIDE THE FAMILY RULE?
MANIEL IS A VERY SIMPLE PERSON, WHO LOVES POWER VERY MUCH.
IF SHE RULED, SHE WOULD RULE WITH A SIMPLE DICTATORSHIP AND EARN THE HATRED OF THE PEOPLE.
OUR GRANDMOTHER ...
THE POSITION OF QUEEN WOULD SOON BE A MERE SHELL OF ITSELF.
EVENTUALLY, A MAN WOULD COME TO RULE.

A RELIGIOUS REFORMATION WOULD OCCUR.
THE LEADERS OF THE REFORMATION WOULD INSTALL A NEW ROYAL FAMILY.
SHE JUST MIGHT BE A VERY HARSH PERSON.
SHE SPEAKS ...
OUR NATION WOULD BE NO DIFFERENT THAN THE KINGDOMS OF THE EAST.
BUT...
...BEFORE THAT WOULD COME ABOUT, OUR WEAKENED LAND WOULD BE ATTACKED BY BRIGION.
...AS IF SHE HAS ALREADY SEEN THE FUTURE OF THE LAND SHE RULES.
AND GRAAL WOULD CEASE TO EXIST.

BUT IS IT REALLY SO BAD?
SOONER OR LATER.
THIS WOULD BE THE NATURAL WAY OF THINGS ...
MY QUEEN!

KAIN!
RUNE...
WHERE'S FIRIEL?
WELL, YOU SEE...
THE PROFES-SOR SAID SHE WENT TO SEE THE QUEEN...
SQUEE!

SQUEEP!
SHALL WE GO SEE?
LET'S.
OF COURSE IT WOULD BE BAD!

FIRIEL...
GRAAL IS MY HOME-LAND!
MY BODY AND...
...MY HEART.
THEY ARE MADE FROM ITS SOIL AND AIR!
ALL OF THE MEMO-RIES...
...THAT MEAN SO MUCH TO ME HAVE COME FROM THIS PLACE!

IT WOULDN'T BE SO BAD...
...IF IT GETS DESTROYED? YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULDN'T SAY THAT!
FIRIEL...
BUT...
...IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE.
THE CONTRACT OF BLOOD THAT WAS MADE WITH FILI IS ABOUT TO BE BROKEN.

LET ME TELL YOU...
...A TALE OF OLDEN TIMES.
IN THE DISTANT PAST...
...THERE WAS A BEAUTIFUL PLANET FILLED WITH SPARKLING WATER...
...AND BRILLIANT GREENERY.
IT OVERFLOWED WITH PEOPLE.

HOW-
EVER...
SOON THEY, THEMSELVES, COULD NO LONGER LIVE THERE.
THE WATER BECAME POLLUTED ...
THE PLANTS DIED...
...THEY COULD NOT CONTROL THEIR GREED AND THE TECH-NOLOGY THEY'D DEVELOPED.
THEY LEFT BEHIND THEIR PLANET IN SEARCH OF A NEW LAND.

AFTER SO MANY TERRIBLE SACRIFICES, THEY FINALLY LEARNED...
...THAT THEIR EXISTENCE WAS DANGEROUS TO THE OTHER LIFE AROUND THEM.
TO KEEP THEMSELVES FROM MAKING THE SAME MISTAKE ...
...TO KEEP THEMSELVES FROM DESTROYING THE THINGS THEY LOVED AGAIN...
...THEY SWORE TO NEVER DISRUPT THE BALANCE OF THE ECOSYSTEM OF THEIR NEW LANDS.

...THERE WAS AN ACCI-DENT.
TO KEEP THIS PROMISE, WHENEVER THERE WERE TOO MANY PEOPLE...
...SOME WOULD LEAVE ON A "COLONY SHIP" AND WANDER SPACE IN SEARCH OF A NEW PLANET TO LIVE ON.
"QUEEN ANNE" WAS ONE SUCH PERSON.
WHILE SHE TRAVELED ON A SHIP CALLED "SEED"...

...ON A PLANET THAT LOOKED JUST LIKE HER HOME-WORLD HAD IN THE DISTANT PAST.
AND SHE FOUND HERSELF...
SHE CONTACTED CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS FOR ORDERS, BUT THERE WAS NO REPLY.
THE PLACE SHE WAS IN WAS INSIDE A DISTORTION OF BOTH SPACE AND TIME.
SHE WAS UNCERTAIN OF WHAT TO DO.
IT WAS 200 YEARS LATER WHEN HEADQUARTERS CONTACTED HER.
SO SHE PUT HERSELF INTO A LIFE-EXTENDING SLEEP, AS A WITNESS TO THE ACCIDENT.

...NOT ONLY THE ACCIDENT BUT ALSO HEADQUARTERS. THEY HAD BEGUN TO SETTLE THE PLANET.
WHEN SHE AWOKE, QUEEN ANNE FOUND THE PEOPLE HAD FORGOTTEN ...
WAIT!
YOU CAN'T JUST FORCE THEM TO GO BACK HOME! PLEASE RECONSIDER!
THEY'VE ALREADY SETTLED THIS PLANET!
That would violate the Planetary Preservation Act.
I PROMISE!
WE WON'T DESTROY THIS PLANET!
Your expansion on that planet puts the environment in danger...
In accordance with the Planetary Preservation Act, we are recalling you all home...
This is headquarters.

DON'T STEAL FROM THEM WHAT THEY LOVE!
SHE WAS BORN ON THE COLONY SHIP, YOU SEE.
MY FIRST SKY...
THE FIRST EARTH I'VE EVER SEEN...
TO HER...
...PERHAPS IT WAS THE "HOME" SHE HAD ALWAYS DREAMED OF.

SO SHE MADE THIS SUGGESTION TO HEAD-QUARTERS--
TO MAKE A NEW HISTORY FOR HUMANITY IN THIS DRAGON-FILLED LAND...
...SHE WOULD TRY SOMETHING NEW FOR HUMANITY ON THIS PLANET THAT WAS SO LIKE THEIR ANCIENT HOME-WORLD.
SHE WOULD RAISE UP A PEOPLE WHO NEVER WARRED OR INVADED, WHO LIVED IN HARMONY WITH THE OTHER CREATURES.
WITH THE HANDS OF A WOMAN...
...SHE WOULD PROTECT THE PLANET AND CULTIVATE A NEW HUMANITY.

QUEEN ANNE...
HEAD-QUARTERS ACCEPTED HER PLAN... BUT WITH A CONDITION.
FILI WOULD TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WORLD ONLY TO THE QUEENS OF ANNE'S LINE, AND THEY ALONE WOULD BE THE ONES TO SPEAK TO HEAD-QUARTERS.
THEY WOULD PLACE THE SUPER-COMPUTER, FILI THE SAGE, HERE ON THIS LAND.
IF ENOUGH PEOPLE CAME TOGETHER TO BREAK THAT WALL--IN OTHER WORDS, IF AN ARMY INVADED GRAAL...
THEY WOULD PLACE AN INVISIBLE STAR IN THE SKY...
...AND USE IT TO CREATE A "WALL" BETWEEN THE HUMANS AND THE DRAGONS.
...THE WALL THAT PROTECTED THE DRAG-ONS WOULD BECOME UNSTABLE ...
...AND HUMANITY WOULD BE DEEMED A THREAT TO THE EN-VIRONMENT.

THEN QUEEN ANNE'S ATTEMPT WOULD BE JUDGED A FAILURE.
BRIGION'S ARMIES HAVE ALREADY BREACHED THE WALL ONCE.
FILI'S WALL WILL NOT LAST LONG.
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME NOW.
HEAD-QUARTERS IS ALREADY PREPARING TO BRING YOU HOME.

Chapter 37:
You're What I Want to Protect

LADY ANNE?
WHERE ARE YOU?
YOU'RE IN THE VIDEO ROOM AGAIN?
YOU NEVER DO GET SICK OF IT, DO YOU?
ABEL ...
NO, I DON'T.
IT SAYS OUR HOME-WORLD ...
...USED TO HAVE ALL KINDS OF BIG CREATURES LIKE THIS.
HAVING BEEN RAISED ON A SPACESHIP, WE COULD NEVER IMAGINE THIS LEVEL OF ABUNDANCE...

WHAT KIND OF PLANET COULD SUPPORT SUCH LIFE?
A RICH, THICK ATMOSPHERE AND GREENERY EVERYWHERE...
A PLANET WITH LIFE REACHING FROM POLE TO POLE...
I SUPPOSE YOU DO WANT TO BE A BIOLOGIST.
DOES OUR ANCIENT HOMELAND HOLD THAT MUCH APPEAL TO YOU?
IT DOES!
THAT'S WHY I'M SCARED...
HUMANITY HAS THE KNOWLEDGE AND POWER TO DESTROY SOMETHING SO VAST WITH REMARKABLE EASE...

THAT'S WHAT OUR HIGH TECHNOLOGY IS FOR, TO STOP THAT FROM HAPPENING, LADY ANNE.
JUST ONE MORE MONTH UNTIL WE REACH OUR DESTINA-TION PLANET.
I CAN'T WAIT!
PLUTO!
WE'LL MAKE OUR HOME ON THE WORLD YOU'VE DREAMED OF...
IT'S SO WONDER-FUL...

QUEEN ANNE'S ATTEMPT TO SAVE THE DRAGONS FROM HUMANITY...
THE CONTRACT OF BLOOD SHE MADE 900 YEARS AGO WITH THE OBSERVER, FILI THE SAGE, IS ALMOST BROKEN.
THE ONLY CHOICE YOU HAVE LEFT...
...IS TO DECIDE WHEN IT ENDS.
FOR 900 YEARS, THE SUPERCOMPUTER FILI HAS RUN BILLIONS OF SIMULATIONS, AND ALL HAVE COME BACK WITH THE SAME RESULT-- FAILURE.

QUEEN ANNE'S IDEALS WERE ALWAYS IMPOSSIBLE.
HUMANS ARE INTELLIGENT CREATURES, AND IT IS NATURAL FOR THEM TO EXPAND THAT INTELLIGENCE.
YOU CAN ATTEMPT TO CREATE A UTOPIA BY RESTRICTING KNOWLEDGE, BUT IT EVENTUALLY WILL FAIL.
HUMANITY WILL OVERWHELM THE OTHER CREATURES AND FILL THE LAND.
BEFORE THAT HAPPENS...
CENTRAL WILL FORCE YOU ALL TO LEAVE THE PLANET...
...IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR PLANETARY PRESERVATION ACT.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE PEOPLE AFTER THEY'RE CALLED BACK?
IT WON'T BE THAT BAD. YOU'LL BE GIVEN EXCELLENT TREATMENT.
YOU WILL START A NEW LIFE IN A DIFFERENT PLACE.
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT YOU MAY LOSE YOUR MEMORIES OF THIS PLACE...
...BUT IT WILL BE AN EASIER AND MORE CONVENIENT LIFE THAN THIS ONE, I BELIEVE.

GOOD MORNING, FIRIEL!
CAN YOU BRING UP SOME WATER AFTER YOU GO TO WASH YOUR FACE?
YES MA'AM!
BRR!
IT'S COLD...
Ah!

STAR QUEEN ...
THANK YOU FOR YOUR BLESSINGS TODAY!
WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT TO ME...

BO IS JUST SO HAPPY!
WHEN A CHILD TURNS EIGHT, THEY WEAR THEIR BEST CLOTHES TO CHURCH.
BO WANTS TO BUY YOU A NICE NEW OUTFIT.
MASTER ...
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SLEEP YET?
EVEN WHEN MOTHER NATURE WAS HARSH...
...I HAD A SIMPLE LIFE...
... WITH WARM PEOPLE.
THAT JOY ...
BUT...
WHAT DO I DO?
MOTHER!

DID YOU ABANDON THE PATH TO BECOME QUEEN...
...BECAUSE YOU KNEW ONE WOMAN COULDN'T MAINTAIN IT ANY LONGER?
UNABLE TO MAKE THE DECISION TO END IT...
HEADING TOWARD DESTRUCTION AND RUIN...
AND THERE'S NO WAY TO STOP IT...
...AS LONG AS HUMANS ARE HUMAN.
I WANT TO PROTECT WHAT I LOVE...
BUT...
...I CAN'T DO IT ALONE.

FIRIEL!
ARE YOU OKAY?

THE TOOLS MY FRIENDS GAVE ME HELPED.
I'M AMAZED YOU MADE IT INTO THE PALACE.
!!!
HEY, RUNE...
RUNE HAS ALWAYS...
...COME TO HELP ME WHENEVER I NEEDED HIM MOST, HASN'T HE?
I HAVE A RE-QUEST...

I'M GOING TO GO PICK A FIGHT WITH FILI THE SAGE.
KEEP ON HOLDING MY HAND...
STAY BESIDE ME.
IF YOU'RE BESIDE ME, I'M NOT SCARED OF ANY-THING.
I'LL STAY BY YOU NO MATTER WHAT.

MY QUEEN, PLEASE LISTEN TO ME!
BARD, TELL THE SAGE...
...THIS IS MY CONCLU-SION.
THE THING I WANT TO PROTECT THE MOST...
...IS RUNE.
HOW I MET HIM IN SERA FIELD...
HOW WE GREW UP TO-GETHER THERE...
HOW SOME-TIMES HE'S VIOLENT AND HOW HE LOVES KNOWLEDGE EVEN WHEN IT MIGHT BRING DESTRUC-TION... THAT'S ALL RUNE!
I WON'T LET ANY-BODY TAKE AWAY...
...EVEN THE SMALLEST PART OF HIM!

IF WOMEN OF IDEALS AND MEN OF KNOWLEDGE ARE BOUND TOGETHER TIGHTLY, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND A WAY TO LIVE WITHOUT DESTROYING THE DRAGONS!
DO YOU...
...REALLY BELIEVE HUMANS AND DRAGONS CAN COEXIST?
I AGREE WITH FIRIEL!
ADALE!
MY LAND HAS RAISED MANY TALENTED WOMEN, AND WE HAVE MANY SKILLED KNIGHTS AS WELL! THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO CARRY ON QUEEN ANNE'S IDEALS!
I REFUSE TO ABANDON WHAT SHE TRIED TO DO!
THAT MAY BE...
...BUT WILL YOUR OLDER SISTER SAY THE SAME THING?

LEAN-
DRA...
HAH.
IT'S A SIMPLE MATTER.
IF AN ARMY WOULD CAUSE DISAS-TER, THEN THERE ARE LESS OBVIOUS METHODS.
ASSASSINA-TION, FOR EXAMPLE. I NEED MERELY REMOVE THE EMPEROR OF BRIGION, ESCRADOS, FROM THE PICTURE.
I'D PREFER TO NOT HAVE TO COOPERATE WITH THOSE TWO...
...BUT MY PRIDE WILL NOT ALLOW ME TO SIMPLY THROW AWAY A FIGHT.

I DIDN'T EXPECT THIS, EVEN FROM MY GRAND-DAUGHTERS...
BARD?
UGH...
THE BARD'S HAIR...
...IS TURNING SILVER?
IT'S USE-LESS.

HA
HA
HA...
Chapter 38: Symphony of the Stars
IT'S
USE-
LESS!

I AM FILI THE SAGE!
I HAVE LIVED IN THE NORTHERN TOWER FOR 900 YEARS, SURROUNDING GRAAL WITH AN INVISIBLE WALL.
Y...
YOU AREN'T THE BARD, ARE YOU?
THE BARD'S BODY IS CONNECTED WITH THE SUPER-COMPUTER IN THE TOWER.
NOW HE IS MY VESSEL IN ORDER TO SHARE THE JUDGMENT OF THE SAGE WITH YOU.

WHY IS THE SAGE OF THE NORTHERN TOWER HERE?!
I USE WHAT I SEE TO PREDICT THE FUTURE. YOU MIGHT SAY I'M THE QUEEN'S ADVISOR.
THROUGH THE BODY OF THE BARD, I SEE ALL OF GRAAL.
MY TRUE BODY DWELLS IN A TOWER FAR TO THE NORTH.
IF I SHUT DOWN THE "HIGH NOON STAR," THE SATELLITE THAT CREATES THE WALL, IT WILL VANISH, AND EVERYTHING WILL END.
...TO KEEP YOU FROM HARMING THIS PLANET.
I WAS THE ONE WHO COVERED THE HUMAN LANDS WITH A MIGHTY WALL...

SAGE FILI--
WAIT!
THE ATTEMPT MAY ONLY BE ABANDONED WITH THE AGREEMENT OF THE SAGE, THE BARD, AND THE QUEEN!
THE ANSWER IS ALREADY PLAIN.
HEED ME...
...DESCENDANTS OF QUEEN ANNE.

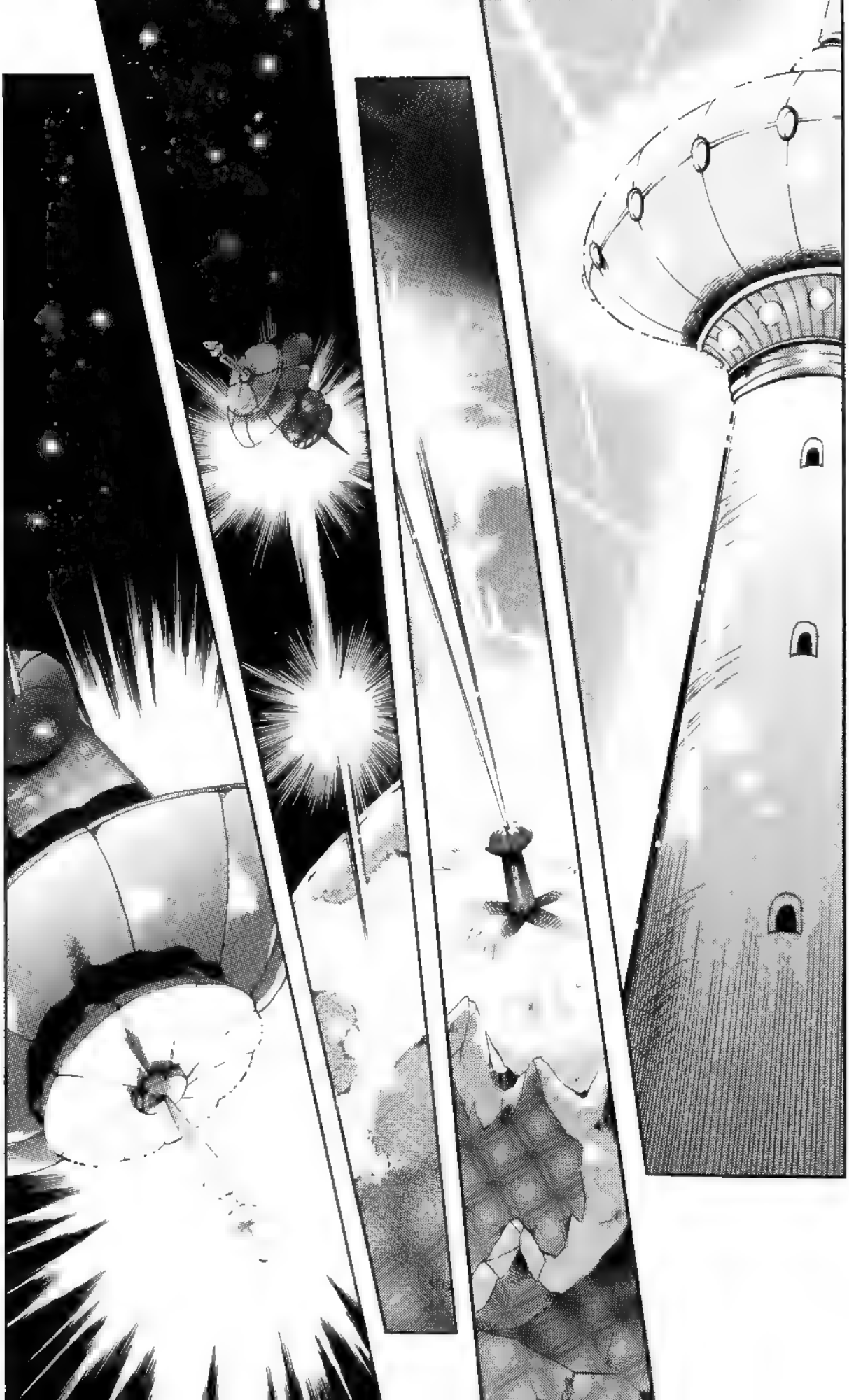
... ABEL, WHO WAS MY ORIGINAL ...
...COPIED HIS MIND AND PERSONALITY INTO AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLI-GENCE.
WHEN QUEEN ANNE BECAME THE FIRST QUEEN...
HE DID THIS TO PROTECT GRAAL IN THE FORM OF THE SUPERCOMPUTER, FILI THE SAGE, EVEN AFTER HIS DEATH.
FOR 900 YEARS...
...I HAVE SEARCHED FOR A WAY TO ALLOW ANNE'S NATION TO SURVIVE.
BUT ALL MY BILLIONS OF SIMULATIONS LEAD TO ONLY ONE RESULT-- DESTRUCTION.

...SOMEDAY MANKIND WILL FILL THE LAND AND REPEAT THE SAME MISTAKES OF OUR HOMEWORLD.
NO MATTER HOW HARD THE QUEEN TRIES TO LEAD HER PEOPLE...
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I CHANGE THE PARAMETERS...
...BY THE INSTINCTS OF HUMANS.
...ANNE'S PRAYER IS DESTROYED ...

I HAVE SEARCHED FOR 900 YEARS.
MY DE-DUCTIONS DO NOT WAVER.
CONTINUING THE ATTEMPT WILL SIMPLY LEAD TO MORE VICTIMS.

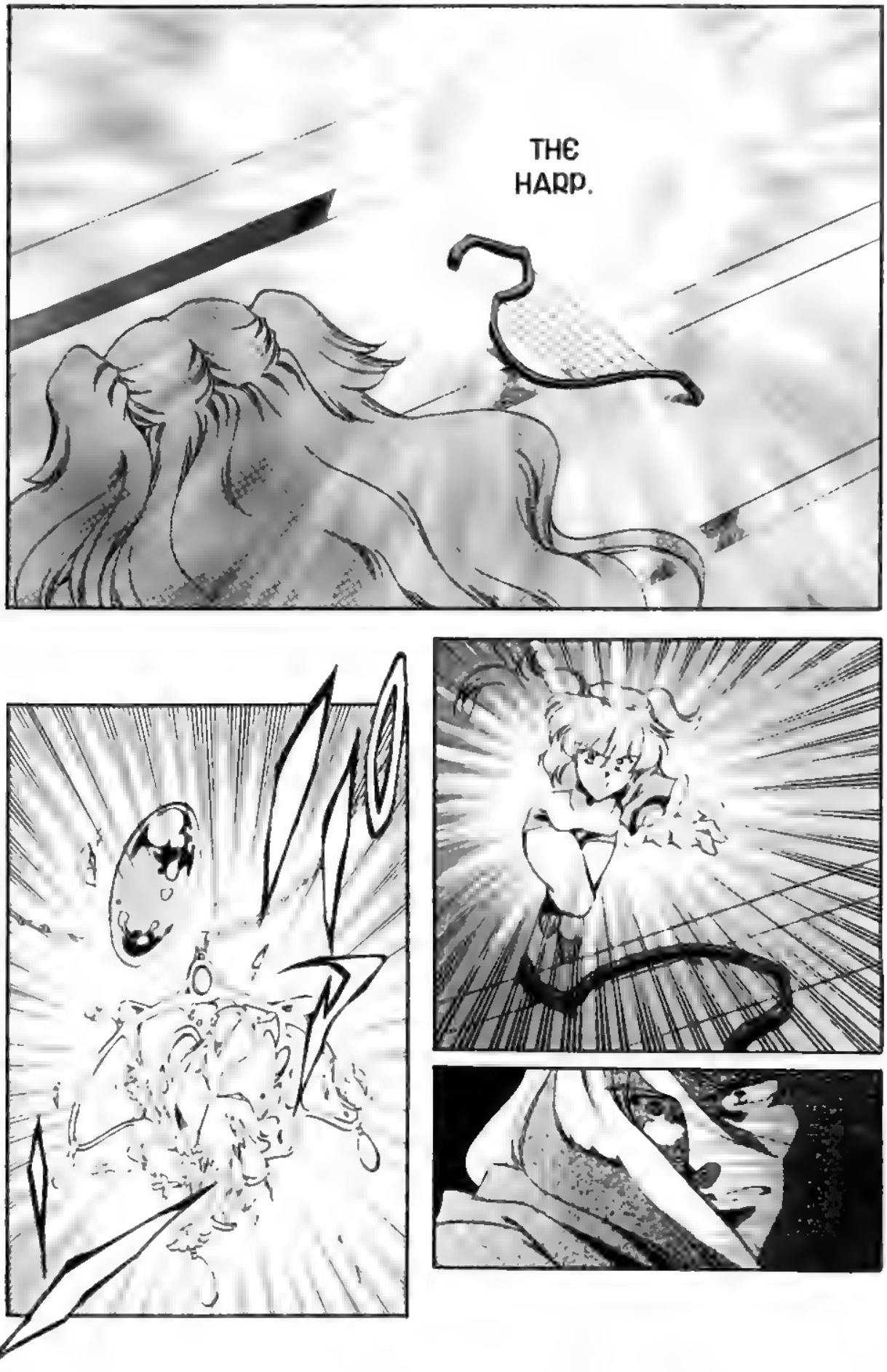
QUEEN ANNE'S UTOPIA ENDS HERE...
...BY MY HANDS.

GWAH!!
LEAN-DRA!
SHUT UP, YOU CURSED OLD MAN!
YOU SURE YOUR BRAINS DIDN'T ROT WHILE YOU WERE SITTING IN THE TOWER?



I WON'T LET THIS BE THE END!
I'VE SHUT DOWN THE HIGH NOON STAR, THE SATELLITE THAT CREATES THE WALL.
AT LAST, THE DAY HAS COME...
IT'S OVER! EVERY-THING IS OVER!
ギャアギャア

UWAH!
POWER ...
I CAN HEAR IT IN MY MIND...
WHO'S THERE?!
LEND ME YOUR POWER...
THE PEN-DANT!


THE
HARP.

PLAY
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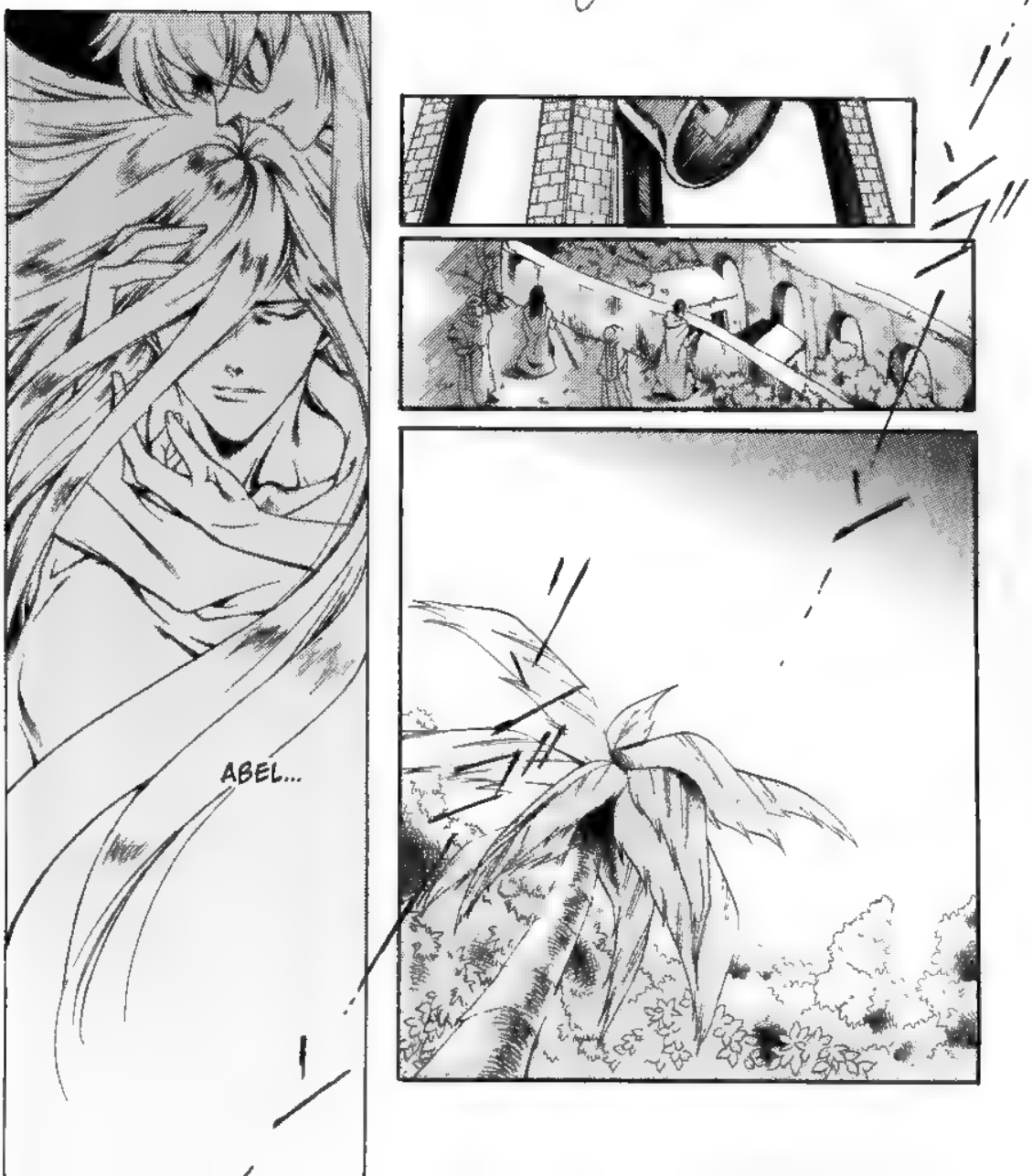
EUSIS, WHAT IS THAT?!
A WALL OF LIGHT, COVERING GRAAL?!


ABEL...

WHY?
WHY ARE YOU HERE...
...LADY ANNE?
WHEN YOU BECAME THE SAGE FOR MY SAKE...
...I ALSO COPIED MYSELF INTO THE TOWER'S ARTIFICIAL INTELLI-GENCE.
I SECRETLY INCLUDED A KEYWORD TO AWAKEN ME WITH THE KINSHIP STONES...
...AND MY SOUL SLEPT IN A TINY CORNER OF YOU FOR 900 YEARS.

AS PART OF THE WALL THAT PROTECTED THE DRAGONS, I SAW EVERY-THING AS I SLEPT.
I WAS ABLE TO SAVE MY DESCEN-DANTS WHEN THEY WERE IN DANGER.
QUEEN ANNE...
SO SHE WAS THE ONE WHO SAVED ME...?
YOU SEARCHED FOR SO LONG, STRUGGLING AGAINST DESPAIR...
THANK YOU...
YOU DID ALL THIS FOR ME, ABEL...

PLUTO, WAIT!
YOU'RE LEAVING ANNE'S COUNTRY? WHY?!
WHAT WILL SHE DO IF SHE LOSES YOU AND THAT CHILD?
YOU LOVE HER, DON'T YOU?!
ABEL ...
...WE ARE SCIEN-TISTS.
SO IS THIS CHILD, WHO CARRIES HER BLOOD AND MINE.

I LOVE ANNE.
SO I HAVE FAITH!
...HE CAN'T LIVE THE LIFE HE WAS MEANT TO LIVE IN HER COUNTRY.
HOWEVER...
I AGREE WITH HER PLAN.
IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO PROTECT THE PLANET FROM HUMANS.
...WHEN ANNE'S NATION FULFILLS HER IDEALS AND A CIVILIZATION IS BORN THAT CAN LIVE IN PEACE WITH THE DRAGONS AND NATURE.
...IN THE DISTANT FUTURE, WE CAN MEET AGAIN...
SOMEDAY...
PLUTO!
...AND THE KING OF THE EAST TRULY BE TOGETHER.
ONLY THEN WILL THE GOOD WITCH OF THE WEST...

PLUTO ...
I HAVE FAITH TOO.
THE DAY WILL COME WHEN YOU TWO CAN BE TOGETHER AGAIN.
I'LL FIND A WAY...
I'LL FIND A WAY TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN!
I'LL FIND A WAY....
NO MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES.

I OWE IT ALL TO YOU.
NO...
I WAS NEVER ABLE TO FIND IT.
BUT YOU DID.
THE MIRACLE YOU GAVE ME...
...WHICH TOOK 900 YEARS, IS RIGHT HERE.
SEE?
IT CAN'T BE...
DON'T THEY LOOK JUST LIKE US?

WHAT?
ON MY TRIP TO THE DESERT, I FOUND OUT...
...RUNE CARRIES THE BLOOD OF THE KING OF THE EAST.
HE'S A DESCENDANT...
...OF YOU AND PLUTO?
YOU HAVE A LITTLE BROTHER NAMED TIGA.
PLUTO...
DID I...
...MAKE IT IN TIME?
DID YOUR LOVE AND HIS SETTLE INTO THE LAND OVER MANY AGES...?

YOU HAVE FINALLY BEEN REUNITED WITH PLUTO?
...HAVE I FULFILLED MY PROM-ISE?
AT LAST...
HIS LAST NAME IS ABEL.
HE LOOKS JUST LIKE WE USED TO.
Sorry I'm late.
NOT JUST HIM.
RUNE! FIRIEL!
KAIN !!
YOU'RE SAFE?

AS LONG AS LIFE...
...CONTIN-UES ON THIS PLANET...
...THAT SEASON WILL REPEAT AGAIN AND AGAIN.
THIS LAND IS YOU...
...AND US AS WELL.
THEN HE'S OUR...?
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU AND I ALSO BECAME A PART OF THE NATION AND THE PLANET.

I'LL STAY WITH YOU.
NOW...
...LET'S WATCH OVER OUR BELOVED CHILDREN FOREVER.
OUR LIVES ARE LIKE A SYM-PHONY.
FATES DRAWN TO EACH OTHER, PLAYING A MELODY TOGETHER ...JUST LIKE THE STARS MOVING IN THE SKY.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MELODY...
HEY!
HERE COMES A DRAG-ON!
CALL THE DRAGON KNIGHT!
WE'LL GO TOO!
IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK IN THE GAME!
AREA D, RIGHT?

FIRIEL, WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?
YOU'RE QUEEN NOW-- YOU CAN'T BE SUCH A TOM-BOY!
BUT SITTING IN THE PALACE ALL DAY IS BORING!
Squee!
UWAH!
LET'S GO, RUU!

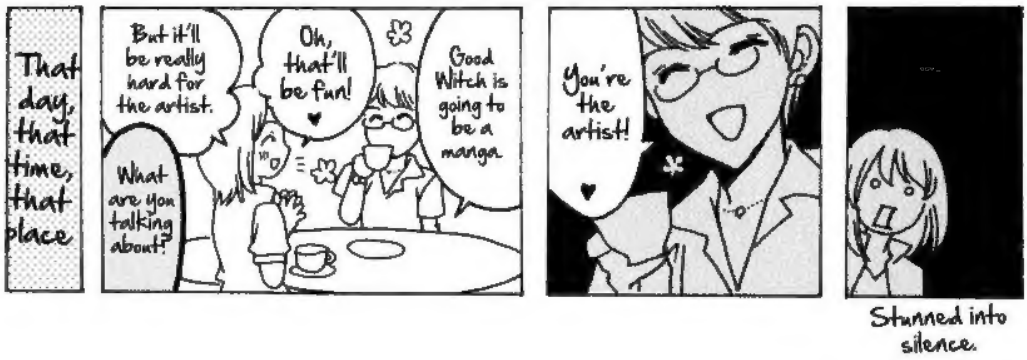
LEANDRA IS QUEEN, AND SHE'S ON A SPY MISSION IN THE BRIGION CAMP!
WELL...
WHO EVER HEARD OF A QUEEN WHO SPENDS MOST OF THE YEAR IN THE FOREST WITH DRAGONS AND UNI-CORNS?
IS SHE TRYING TO BECOME EMPRESS OF BRIGION?
I SHOULDN'T SAY THIS TOO LOUDLY, BUT SHE WAS TALKING ABOUT SEDUCING ESCRADOS, THE EMPEROR OF BRIGION...
YEAH.
THE "FIREWORKS" YOU DEVEL-OPED ARE WORKING OUT NICELY.
THEY'RE DANGEROUS EXPLOSIVES, BUT THEY CAN SAVE LIVES IF YOU'RE CAREFUL "NOT TO MAKE THE GODDESS CRY."

NEVER...
THE ONE I LOVE ...
I'LL NEVER LET HER CRY...
I SWEAR IT ON MY PRIDE AS A GRAAL SCIENTIST.

SOME-
TIMES
QUARREL-
LING OR
BEING
APART.
BELIEV-
ING IN
EACH
OTHER.
PROTECT-
ING EACH
OTHER.
BORN
AGAIN
AND
AGAIN...
...THE
CYCLE
CONTIN-
UES AS
LONG AS
THERE IS
LIFE.

IT'S A SONG THAT HAS NO END...
...A NEVER-ENDING SYM-PHONY OF THE STARS.

↓ Chuokoron-Shinsha Editor


That day, that time, that place
But it'll be really hard for the artist.
What are you talking about?
Oh, that'll be fun!
Good Witch is going to be a manga
You're the artist!
Stunned into silence.

Thanks for reading!

Hmm...what to write?

Let me start by saying thank you all so much!

My editor, Oscar Inoue-sama, I'm sorry there're always so many problems... I was able to finish this because you ~~threatened~~ cheered me on!

I haven't slept for 50 hours, but I can still draw a picture of a cute girl! Hahaha!

My assistants, Yucie-san, Ichiro-kun, I owe you my life. I hope you'll keep working with me! Don't abandon me!

All my friends, thanks so much for your kind words whenever a deadline gets close!

Ogiwara-sensei, who always watched over me with a smile... I'm more grateful to you than I could ever say. Adale is so cute on the new short story book!

To everyone who read this manga, I hope happiness comes to you!

Thank you so much!
-Haruhiko Momokawa